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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN,

FROM THE  
FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS UNDER  
JULIUS CÆSAR.

WRITTEN ON A NEW PLAN.

---

By ROBERT HENRY, D. D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH, MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIANS  
OF SCOTLAND, AND OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

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THE SIXTH EDITION.  
IN TWELVE VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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1823.

THE

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of this Work, who died in 1790, left some part of the Volumes which are now offered to the Public unfinished; for Chapter V. on *Arts*, and Chapter VII. on *Manners*, &c. he had only sketched out a few of the authorities, and no part of the narrative was written by him: Those two Chapters are entirely the work of MALCOLM LAING, Esquire, who has finished them at the request of Dr Henry's Executors. The whole of the Appendix is also Mr Laing's; but the reader may be assured, that every other part of the volumes was completed by Dr. Henry himself, and is faithfully published from his manuscript.





TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
WILLIAM Earl of MANSFIELD,  
&c. &c.  
THESE POSTHUMOUS VOLUMES  
OF THE  
HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN,  
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED  
BY DR HENRY'S EXECUTORS,  
H. MONCREIFF WELLWOOD,  
WM. BALDERSTONE,  
WM. FINLAY.

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☞ Dr HENRY was always proud of the friendship with which the late EARL of MANSFIELD had honoured him; and it was the wish of his heart that the last part of his literary labours should be introduced to the world under His Lordship's patronage.

The death of that Nobleman has deprived the following Volumes of this advantage. But the Executors of Dr HENRY are persuaded that they could not better fulfil the intention of the Author, than by inscribing this Work to the MEMORY of the EARL of MANSFIELD.

Dr HENRY's friends have the satisfaction to believe, that a man whom His Lordship esteemed as an Author, cannot be soon forgotten; posterity will know that the History of Great Britain written by Dr Henry was encouraged and protected by one of the wisest and greatest men of his time, whose old age was as venerable, as his active life was meritorious and distinguished.

LONDON, 22d April 1793.



THE  
L I F E  
OF  
ROBERT HENRY, D.D.

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DR ROBERT HENRY, author of the “History of Great Britain, written on a new plan,” was the son of James Henry, farmer at Muirtown, in the parish of St Ninian’s, North Britain, and of Jean Galloway, daughter of — Galloway of Burrow-meadow in Stirlingshire. He was born on the 18th of February 1718; and, having early resolved to devote himself to a literary profession, was educated, first under a Mr John Nicholson at the parish school of St Ninian’s, and for some time at the grammar school of Stirling. He completed his course of academical study at the University of Edinburgh, and afterwards became master of the grammar school of Annan. He was licensed to preach on the 27th of March 1746, and was the first licentiate of the Presbytery of Annan after its erection into a separate Presbytery. Soon after, he received a call from a congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters at Car-

lisle, where he was ordained in November 1748. In this station he remained twelve years; and on the 13th of August 1760, became pastor of a Dissenting congregation in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Here he married, in 1763, Ann Balderston, daughter of Thomas Balderston, surgeon in Berwick; by whom he had no children, but with whom he enjoyed, to the end of his life, a large share of domestic happiness. He was removed from Berwick to be one of the ministers of Edinburgh in November 1768; was minister of the church of the New Grey Friars from that time till November 1776; and then became colleague-minister in the Old Church, and remained in that station till his death. The degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred on him by the University of Edinburgh in 1770; and in 1774, he was unanimously chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and is the only person on record who obtained that distinction the first time he was a member of the Assembly.

From these facts, which contain the outlines of Dr Henry's life, few events can be expected to suit the purpose of the biographer. Though he must have been always distinguished among his private friends, till he was translated to Edinburgh, he had few opportunities of being known to the public. The composition of sermons must have occupied a chief part of his time during his residence at Carlisle; and his industry in that station is known to have rendered his labours in this department easy to him

during the rest of his life. But even there he found leisure for other studies; and the knowledge of classical literature, in which he eminently excelled, soon enabled him to acquire an extent of information which qualified him for something more important than he had hitherto had in his view.

Soon after his removal to Berwick, he published a scheme for raising a fund for the benefit of the widows and orphans of Protestant Dissenting Ministers in the north of England. This idea was probably suggested by the prosperity of the fund which had, almost thirty years before, been established for a provision to ministers' widows, &c. in Scotland. But the situations of the clergy of Scotland were very different from the circumstances of dissenting ministers in England. Annuities and provisions were to be secured to the families of Dissenters, without subjecting the individuals (as in Scotland) to a proportional annual contribution, and without such means of creating a fund as could be the subject of an act of parliament to secure the annual payments. The acuteness and activity of Dr Henry surmounted these difficulties; and, chiefly by his exertions, this useful and benevolent institution commenced about the year 1762. The management was intrusted to him for several years; and its success has exceeded the most sanguine expectations which were formed of it. The plan itself, now sufficiently known, it is unnecessary to explain minutely. But it is mentioned here, because Dr Henry was accustomed, in the last years of his life, to speak of this Institu-



tion with peculiar affection, and to reflect on its progress and utility with that kind of satisfaction which a good man can only receive from “the labour of love and of good works.”

It was probably about the year 1763, that he first conceived the idea of his History of Great Britain; a work already established in the public opinion, and which will certainly be regarded by posterity, not only as a book which has greatly enlarged the sphere of history, and gratifies our curiosity on a variety of subjects which fall not within the limits prescribed by preceding historians, but as one of the most accurate and authentic repositories of historical information which this country has produced. The plan adopted by Dr Henry, which is indisputably his own, and its peculiar advantages, are sufficiently explained in his general preface. In every period it arranges, under separate heads or chapters, the civil and military history of Great Britain; the history of religion; the history of our constitution, government, laws, and courts of justice; the history of learning, of learned men, and of the chief seminaries of learning; the history of arts; the history of commerce, of shipping, of money or coin, and of the price of commodities; and the history of manners, virtues, vices, customs, language, dress, diet, and amusements. Under these seven heads, which extend the province of an historian greatly beyond its usual limits, every thing curious or interesting in the history of any country may be comprehended. But it certainly required more than a common share of literary

courage to attempt, on so large a scale, a subject so intricate and extensive as the history of Britain from the invasion of Julius Cæsar. That Dr Henry neither overrated his powers nor his industry, could only have been proved by the success and reputation of his works.

But he soon found that his residence at Berwick was an insuperable obstacle to the minute researches which the execution of his plan required. His situation there excluded him from the means of consulting the original authorities; and though he attempted to find access to them by means of his literary friends, and, with their assistance, made some progress in his work, his information was notwithstanding so incomplete, that he found it impossible to prosecute his plan to his own satisfaction, and was at last compelled to relinquish it.

By the friendship of Gilbert Laurie esq. late Lord Provost of Edinburgh, and one of his Majesty's commissioners of excise in Scotland, who had married the sister of Mrs Henry, he was removed to Edinburgh in 1768; and to this event the public are indebted for his prosecution of the History of Great Britain. His access to the public libraries, and the means of supplying the materials which these did not afford him, were from that time used with so much diligence and perseverance, that the first volume of his History in quarto was published in 1771, the second in 1774, the third in 1777, the fourth in 1781, and the fifth (which brings down the history to the accession of Henry VII.) in 1785. The subject of these volumes compre-

hends the most intricate and obscure periods of our history; and when we consider the scanty and scattered materials which Dr Henry has digested, and the accurate and minute information which he has given us under every chapter of his work, we must have a high opinion both of the learning and industry of the author, and of the vigour and activity of his mind; especially when it is added, that he employed no amanuensis, but completed the manuscript with his own hand; and that, excepting the first volume, the whole book, such as it is, was printed from the original copy. Whatever corrections were made on it, were inserted by interlineations, or in revising the proof-sheets. He found it necessary, indeed, to confine himself to a first copy, from an unfortunate tremor in his hand, which made writing extremely inconvenient, which obliged him to write with his paper on a book placed on his knee instead of a table, and which unhappily increased to such a degree, that in the last years of his life he was often unable to take his victuals without assistance. An attempt which he made after the publication of the fifth volume to employ an amanuensis did not succeed. Never having been accustomed to dictate his compositions, he found it impossible to acquire a new habit; and though he persevered but a few days in the attempt, it had a sensible effect on his health, which he never afterwards recovered. An author has no right to claim indulgence, and is still less entitled to credit from the public, for anything which can be ascribed to negligence in committing his manuscripts to the

Press ; but considering the difficulties which Dr Henry surmounted, and the accurate research and information which distinguish his history, the circumstances which have been mentioned are far from being uninteresting, and must add considerably to the opinion formed of his merit among men who are judges of what he has done. He did not profess to study the ornaments of language ; but his arrangement is uniformly regular and natural, and his style simple and perspicuous. More than this he has not attempted, and this cannot be denied him. He believed, that the time which might be spent in polishing, or rounding a sentence, was more usefully employed in investigating and ascertaining a fact ; and, as a book of facts and solid information, supported by authentic documents, his History will stand a comparison with any other History of the same period.

But Dr Henry had other difficulties to surmount than those which related to the composition of his work. Not having been able to transact with the booksellers to his satisfaction, the five volumes were originally published at the risk of the author. When the first volume appeared, it was censured with an unexampled acrimony and perseverance. Magazines, reviews, and even newspapers, were filled with abusive remarks and invectives, in which both the author and the book were treated with contempt and scurrility. When an author has once submitted his works to the public, he has no right to complain of the *just* severity of criticism. But Dr Henry had to contend with the inveterate

scorn of malignity. In compliance with the usual custom, he had permitted a sermon to be published which he had preached before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in 1773; a composition containing plain good sense on a common subject, from which he expected no reputation. This was eagerly seized on by the adversaries of his History, and torn to pieces with a virulence and asperity which no want of merit in the sermon could justify or explain. An anonymous letter had appeared in a newspaper to vindicate the History from some of the unjust censures which had been published, and asserting, from the real merit and accuracy of the book, the author's title to the approbation of the public. An answer appeared in the course of the following week, charging him, in terms equally confident and indecent, with having written this letter in his own praise. The efforts of malignity seldom fail to defeat their purpose, and to recoil on those who direct them. Dr Henry had many friends, and, till lately, had not discovered that he had any enemies. But the author of the anonymous vindication was unknown to him, till the learned and respectable Dr Macqueen, from the indignation excited by the confident petulance of the answer, informed him that the letter had been written by him. These anecdotes are still remembered. The abuse of the History, which began in Scotland, was renewed in some of the periodical publications in South Britain; though it is justice to add (without meaning to refer to the candid observations of English



critics), that in both kingdoms the asperity originated in the same quarter, and that paragraphs and criticisms written at Edinburgh were printed in London. The same spirit appeared in Strictures published on the second and third volumes; but by this time it had in a great measure lost the attention of the public. The malevolence was sufficiently understood, and had long before become fatal to the circulation of the periodical paper from which it originally proceeded. The book, though printed for the author, had sold beyond his most sanguine expectations; and had received both praise and patronage from men of the first literary characters in the kingdom; and though, from the alarm which had been raised, the booksellers did not venture to purchase the property till after the publication of the fifth volume, the work was established in the opinion of the public, and at last rewarded the author with a high degree of celebrity, which he happily lived to enjoy.

In an article relating to Dr Henry's life, not to have mentioned the opposition which his History encountered, would have been both affectation and injustice. The facts are sufficiently remembered, and are unfortunately too recent to be more minutely explained. That they contributed at first to retard the sale of the work is undeniable, and may be told without regret, now that its reputation is established. The book has raised itself to eminence as a History of Great Britain by its own merits; and the means employed to obstruct its progress have only served to embellish its success.

Dr Henry was no doubt encouraged from the first by the decided approbation of some of his literary friends, who were allowed to be the most competent judges of his subject; and, in particular, by one of the most eminent historians of the present age, whose history of the same periods justly possesses the highest reputation. The following character of the first and second volumes was drawn up by that gentleman, and is well entitled to be inserted in a narrative of Dr Henry's life. "Those who profess a high esteem for the "first volume of Dr Henry's History, I may venture to say, are almost as numerous as those who "have perused it, provided they be competent "judges of a work of that nature, and are acquainted with the difficulties which attend such "an undertaking. Many of those who had been "so well pleased with the first, were impatient to "see the second volume, which advances into a "field more delicate and interesting; but the "Doctor hath shown the maturity of his judgment, as in all the rest, so particularly, in giving "no performance to the public that might appear "crude or hasty, or composed before he had fully "collected and digested the materials. I venture, with great sincerity, to recommend this "volume to the perusal of every curious reader "who desires to know the state of Great Britain, in a period which has hitherto been "regarded as very obscure, ill supplied with "writers, and not possessed of a single one that "deserves the appellation of a good one. It is "wonderful what an instructive, and even enter-

“ taining book the Doctor has been able to com-  
 “ pose from such unpromising materials: *Tantum*  
 “ *series juncturaque pollet*. When we see those  
 “ barbarous ages delineated by so able a pen, we  
 “ admire the oddness and singularity of the man-  
 “ ners, customs, and opinions of the times, and  
 “ seem to be introduced into a new world; but  
 “ we are still more surprised, as well as interest-  
 “ ed, when we reflect, that those strange person-  
 “ ages were the ancestors of the present inhabit-  
 “ ants of this island. The object of an antiquary  
 “ hath been commonly distinguished from that of  
 “ an historian; for though the latter should enter  
 “ into the province of the former, it is thought  
 “ that it should only be *quanto basta*, that is, so far  
 “ as is necessary, without comprehending all the  
 “ minute disquisitions which give such supreme  
 “ pleasure to the mere antiquary. Our learned  
 “ author hath fully reconciled these two charac-  
 “ ters. His historical narrative is as full as those  
 “ remote times seem to demand, and at the same  
 “ time his inquiries of the antiquarian kind omit  
 “ nothing which can be an object of doubt or  
 “ curiosity. The one as well as the other is de-  
 “ livered with great perspicuity, and no less pro-  
 “ priety, which are the true ornaments of this  
 “ kind of writing. All superfluous embellish-  
 “ ments are avoided; and the reader will hardly  
 “ find in our language any performance that  
 “ unites together so perfectly the two great  
 “ points of entertainment and instruction.”—  
 The gentleman who wrote this character died  
 before the publication of the third volume.\*

\* The quarto Edition in six Volumes is referred to throughout.

The progress of Dr Henry's work introduced him to more extensive patronage, and in particular to the notice and esteem of the late Earl of Mansfield. That venerable nobleman, who was so well entitled to the gratitude and admiration of his country, thought the merit of Dr Henry's History so considerable, that, without any solicitation, after the publication of the fourth volume, he applied personally to his Majesty to bestow on the author some mark of his royal favour. In consequence of this, Dr Henry was informed by a letter from Lord Stormont, then Secretary of State, of his Majesty's intention to confer on him an annual pension for life, of 100*l*. "considering  
"his distinguished talents and great literary  
"merit, and the importance of the very useful  
"and laborious work in which he was so success-  
"fully engaged, as titles to his royal counte-  
"nance and favour." The warrant was issued on the 28th of May 1781; and his right to the pension commenced from the 5th of April preceding. This pension he enjoyed till his death, and always considered it as inferring a new obligation to persevere steadily in the prosecution of his work. From the Earl of Mansfield he received many other testimonies of esteem, both as a man and as an author, which he was often heard to mention with the most affectionate gratitude. The octavo edition of his History, published in 1788, was inscribed to his Lordship. The quarto edition had been dedicated to the King.

The property of the work had hitherto remained with himself; but in April 1786, when an octavo



edition was intended, he conveyed the property to Messrs Cadell and Strahan for the sum of 1000*l*.; reserving to himself what still remained unsold of the quarto edition. Dr Henry had kept very accurate accounts of the sales from the time of the original publication; and, after his last transaction, he found that his real profits had amounted in the whole to about 3300*l*.; a striking proof of the intrinsic merit of a work which had forced its way to the public esteem, in spite of the malignant opposition with which the first volumes had to struggle.

The prosecution of his history had been Dr Henry's favourite object for almost thirty years of his life. He had naturally a sound constitution, and a more equal and larger portion of animal spirits than is commonly possessed by literary men: but from the year 1785 his bodily strength was sensibly impaired: notwithstanding this, he persisted steadily in preparing his sixth volume, which brings down the history to the accession of Edward VI., and it is now published by his executors; they flatter themselves that it will be found entitled to the same favourable reception from the public which has been given to the former volumes. It was written under the disadvantages of bad health and great weakness of body. The tremulous motion of his hand had increased so as to render writing much more difficult to him than it had ever been: but the vigour of his mind and his ardour were unimpaired; and, independent of the general cha-



racter of his works, the posthumous volume will be a lasting monument of the strength of his faculties, and of the literary industry and perseverance which ended only with his life.

Dr Henry's original plan extended from the invasion of Britain by the Romans to the present times: and men of literary curiosity must regret that he has not lived to complete his design; but he has certainly finished the most difficult parts of his subject. The periods after the accession of Edward VI. afford materials more ample, better digested, and much more within the reach of common readers.

The works of an author make so considerable a part of his personal history, that the account of them is in danger of encroaching on the place which ought to be reserved for his private life. But though Dr Henry's character as a man was sufficiently interesting, his death is too recent to permit the minuteness of a biographer. An account of his habits, his friendships, his amusements, his convivial intercourse, such as a reader of narratives of this sort expects, cannot be given to those who shared in his society, without mixing the history of the living with the character of the dead. Nothing but what is general can be said; and much must therefore be withheld which a friend might wish to read, and which might gratify the curiosity of a stranger.

Though his literary engagements might have been supposed to have given him sufficient em-

ployment, he always found time for what he believed to be objects of public utility, as well as for the offices of private friendship. In public life, no man was more steady or active in pursuing his purpose, or sought the means of attaining it with more integrity. As an ecclesiastical man, he followed the unbiassed dictates of his own mind, uniformly promoting the measures which he thought most for the interest of religion and of his country, and persevering in the principles he avowed, though in the General Assembly they most frequently led him to be included in the votes of the minority. Of the public societies of Edinburgh, he was always one of the most useful and indefatigable members; regular in his attendance as long as his health permitted him, and always pure in his intentions. But in serving and assisting his private friends, he discovered an ardour and activity through his whole life more interesting than the most distinguished literary fame; even the sons of those who had once been his companions, were certain of every assistance in his power, if he thought they deserved it; and no consideration could persuade him to desert a man whom he esteemed, or whom he believed to have a claim on his friendship. He was particularly attentive to young men who were prosecuting a literary education. He had himself experienced difficulties in his youth, and mentioned them often as motives which he could not resist, to assist the industry and merit of other men. His

activity to serve his friends was always accompanied with an earnestness and good will, which added greatly to the obligations he conferred. Besides his friends, he was particularly attentive to his relations, of whom he had a number, whose circumstances were not opulent; with them he shared his good fortune, as soon as the profits of his book enabled him to be useful to them; and, with the exception of an annuity to Mrs Henry, and a few small legacies, left them by his will all the property he had acquired. His pension and the profits of his book had placed him at last in easy circumstances, and enabled him to do for his relations what gave great satisfaction to his worthy and benevolent mind.

Dr Henry was naturally fond of society; and few men ever enjoyed society more perfectly, or were capable of contributing so much to the pleasures of conversation. Notwithstanding his literary pursuits, he was always ready to make one in a party of his friends; and attached himself to pleasant and respectable companions wherever he found them, without any regard to the competitions or contrary opinions which unhappily so often prevent worthy men from associating. His extensive knowledge, his cheerfulness and pleasantry, his inexhaustible fund of humour and anecdote, would have made him a distinguished character among any description of men, although he had had no pretensions as an author. His great extent of solid informa-

tion give a variety to his conversation, to which much was added by his talents for convivial pleasantries. He had a story or anecdote ready for every occasion, and adapted to every subject; and was peculiarly happy in selecting the circumstances which could render it interesting and pointed. If the same narratives were sometimes repeated, a circumstance which was unavoidable, they were always seasoned with a new relish; and even those who lived most with him, have seldom been in his company without hearing from him something which was as new to them as to strangers. His character was uniform to the end. He conversed with the ardour and even with the gaiety of youth long after his bodily strength had yielded to the infirmities of age; and even within a few days of his death, which he was every day expecting, he could mix anecdotes and pleasantries with the most serious discourse.

For several years he had spent a part of every season at Milnfield, a country-house with a few acres surrounding it, about twenty miles from Edinburgh, of which he had a lease for his own life and Mrs Henry's. He had been attracted to this situation by its vicinity to his friend Mr Laurie's estate, to whose family he had always an affectionate attachment. Here he prosecuted his studies without interruption; and amused himself with such improvements and alterations on his small farm as his convenience or his fancy suggested to him. He built a small room for a

library, which he had surrounded with trees, and inscribed "*Olio et Musis*;" and, the situation admitting of it, he fitted up on the ground floor a place for a cold bath, which his physicians had directed him to use, on the door of which he had written, "Be easily pleased;" a circumstance highly characteristic of his own temper in the common affairs of life.

His health had been gradually declining since the year 1785. He had been unable to preach for several years, and an assistant had supplied his place. On this account he spent more of his time than usual at Milnfield. Till the summer of 1790 he was able to pursue his studies, though not without some interruptions; but at that time, though he had no particular disease, a universal relaxation and debility assured him that his constitution was exhausted. What rendered his situation more depressing still, Mrs Henry had for some time discovered symptoms of a cataract on her eyes, which in 1790 reduced her to a state of almost total blindness. In the month of August he accompanied her to Edinburgh, where she submitted to an operation, which was so far unsuccessful, that she did not recover her sight during his life. From the time of his return to Milnfield in September, his strength was sensibly diminished; and he was soon convinced that he had but a few weeks to live. No man could meet death with more equanimity or fortitude, or with a fortitude derived from better sources. He mentioned his death easily, and often as an event



which in his situation was desirable, sensible that, from the exhausted state of his body, he could no longer enjoy this world, or be useful in it; and expressing in the most explicit terms his firm persuasion of the great doctrines of Christianity, and the full expectation he derived from them of “life and immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord.” His faculties were perfectly entire; nor could any change be observed in his manner or conversation with his friends. He was never confined to bed, and conversed easily till within a few hours of his death. He had a strength of mind which falls to the lot of few; and Providence permitted him to preserve the full possession of it.

A few days before his death he executed a deed, which he dictated himself, by which he disposed his collection of books to the magistrates, town-council, and presbytery of Linlithgow, as the foundation of a public library; under certain regulations and conditions which he expressed very distinctly, and by means of which he flattered himself that a library might at last be created, which might contribute to diffuse knowledge and literature in the country. This idea had been suggested to him by his experience in the public utility of libraries of this sort, which had been established at Berwick and at Kelso. By such institutions the means of knowledge may be obtained in remote situations at a small expense, and are easily circulated among the different orders of men; and though his col-



lection of books was not a large one, he believed that the institution required only to be begun under proper regulations, and might soon become considerable if proper attention should be given to it. His intentions were certainly pure; and the rules he suggested well suited to the design. The magistrates of Linlithgow have prepared a room, and curators for the management of the library have been chosen in terms of the deed. The public have reason to expect from them every thing by which they can promote the benevolent and respectable intentions of the founder. He gave very minute directions with regard to his affairs, and even dictated a list of his friends whom he wished to be present at his funeral; and with a constitution quite worn out, died on the 24th of November 1790, in the seventy-third year of his age. He was buried in the church-yard of Polmont, where a monument is erected to his memory.

Dr Henry's personal virtues will not be soon forgotten. Among his friends he will always be remembered with tenderness; and his character as an author will be respected by posterity, long after the events of his private life shall become too distant to be interesting.

TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM, EARL OF MANSFIELD,  
§c. §c. §c.

MY LORD,

IF the merits of this Work were as conspicuous as the dignity and virtues of its illustrious patrons, it would be well entitled to the attention and favour of the Public. I had the honour to dedicate the first impression of it to our Most Gracious Sovereign, the generous, munificent promoter of every laudable undertaking. I have now the honour to dedicate this impression of it to your Lordship, whose extraordinary talents, surprising pene-

tration, persuasive eloquence, consummate wisdom, and inflexible integrity in the administration of justice, have long been the objects of universal admiration. I acknowledge that I am not unwilling to let the world and posterity know (if any thing of mine shall reach posterity) that I had the happiness to be encouraged in the prosecution of this Work by one of the most virtuous Monarchs that ever adorned a throne, and by one of the wisest, best, and greatest men of the age in which I lived. While I continue to enjoy that encouragement, and the increasing favour of the Public, I shall proceed in the execution of my plan with all the attention and fidelity of which I am capable, and all the expedition the state of my health and the duties of my station will permit.

That the Almighty Ruler of the World may prolong your Lordship's valuable life to a very lengthened period, and after a long, happy, and honourable life, exalt you to a state of pure and sublime felicity that shall never end, is the sincere and fervent prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and

Most obedient Servant,

ROBERT HENRY.



THE  
GENERAL PREFACE.

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THIS History of Great Britain is written on a plan so different from that of any former history of this island, or indeed of any other country, that it is necessary to lay before the reader—A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE CHIEF DESIGN AND OBJECT OF THIS WORK :—A DECLINATION OF THE PLAN ON WHICH IT IS WRITTEN :—And, A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROBABLE AND EXPECTED ADVANTAGES OF THAT PLAN.

Necessity and subject of the preface.

The chief design then of this work is this :—To give the reader a concise account of the most important events which have happened in Great Britain, from the first invasion of it by the Romans, under Julius Cæsar, to the present times ; together with a distinct view of the religion, laws, learning, arts, commerce, and manners of its inhabitants, in every age between these two periods. It is intended to draw a faithful

Chief design and object of the work.



picture of the characters and circumstances of our ancestors from age to age, both in public and in private life ; to describe, in their genuine colours, the great actions they performed, and the disgraces they sustained ; the liberties they enjoyed, and the thralldom to which they were subjected ; the knowledge, natural, moral, and religious, with which they were illuminated, and the darkness in which they were involved ; the arts they practised, and the commerce they carried on ; the virtues with which they were adorned, and the vices with which they were infected ; the pleasures and amusements in which they delighted, and the distresses and miseries to which they were exposed ; not omitting even their fleeting fashions, and ever-changing customs and modes of life, when they can be discovered. This, it is hoped, will give the reader as clear, full and just ideas of Great Britain, and of its inhabitants, in every age, as can reasonably be desired, or, at least, as can now be obtained from the faithful records of history.

To accomplish this very extensive design within as narrow limits as possible, the author hath endeavoured to express every thing in

the fewest and plainest words; to avoid all digressions and repetitions; and to arrange his materials in the most regular order, according to the following plan:

The whole work is divided into ten books. Plan of the work. Each book begins and ends at some remarkable revolution, and contains the history and delineation of the first of these revolutions, and of the intervening period. Every one of these ten books is uniformly divided into seven chapters, which do not carry on the thread of the history one after another, as in other works of this kind; but all the seven chapters of the same book begin at the same point of time, run parallel to one another, and end together; each chapter presenting the reader with the history of one particular object. For example:

The first chapter of each book contains the civil and military history of Great Britain, in the period which is the subject of that book. The second chapter of the same book contains the history of religion, or the ecclesiastical history of Britain, in the same period. The third chapter contains the history of our constitution, government, laws, and courts of justice. The fourth chapter comprehends the history of learning, of learned men, and

of the chief seminaries of learning. The fifth chapter contains the history of the arts, both useful and ornamental, necessary and pleasing. The sixth chapter is employed in giving the history of commerce, of shipping, of money or coin, and of the prices of commodities. The seventh and last chapter of the same book contains the history of the manners, virtues, vices, remarkable customs, language, dress, diet, and diversions, of the people of Great Britain, in the same period. This plan is regularly and strictly pursued from the beginning to the end of this work: so that each of the ten books of which it consists, may be considered as a complete work in itself, as far as it reaches; and also as a perfect pattern and model of all the other books.

To render this plan still more perfectly regular and uniform in all its parts, the author hath disposed the materials of all the chapters of the same number, in all the ten books, in the same order, as far as the subjects treated of in these chapters would permit. For example: The arts, which are the subject of the fifth chapter of every book, are disposed one after another in the same order of succession, in all the fifth chapters through the whole

work. The same may be said of all the other chapters, whose subjects are capable of being disposed in a regular order and arrangement. By this means, as every book is a perfect model of all the other books of this work, so every chapter is also a perfect model of all the other chapters of the same number. It is thought unnecessary to attempt to carry order and regularity of method further than this. It is even imagined, that any endeavour to do this would defeat its own design, by rendering the plan too intricate and artificial.

Such is the plan upon which the following work is written. That it is new, will not be disputed. The advantages of it (if the author is not mistaken) are so many and obvious, that they might be safely trusted to the discovery of every intelligent reader. It may not however be improper to subjoin a few short observations on the probable and expected advantages of this plan. For, though these observations may appear superfluous to many, they may be useful to some.

By this plan the sphere of history will be very much enlarged; and many useful and entertaining subjects introduced into it, which

Advantages  
of this plan.

1st advantage.

were formerly excluded. The far greatest number of our historians have given us only a detail of our civil, military, and ecclesiastical affairs : a few of them have inserted occasional dissertations on our constitution, government, and laws : but not one of them hath given, or so much as pretended or designed to give, any thing like a history of learning, arts, commerce, and manners. All that we find in the very best of our historians, on these interesting subjects, are a few cursory remarks, which serve rather to excite than gratify our curiosity. Are these subjects then unworthy of a place in history, especially in the history of a country where learning, arts, commerce, and politeness flourish ? Doth not the ingenious scholar, who hath enlarged and enlightened the faculties of the human mind ; the inventive artist, who hath increased the comforts and conveniences of human life ; the adventurous merchant or mariner, who hath discovered unknown countries, and opened new sources of trade and wealth ; deserve a place in the annals of his country, and in the grateful remembrance of posterity, as well as even the good prince, the wise politician, or the victorious general ? Can we form just ideas



of the characters and circumstances of our ancestors, by viewing them only in the flames of civil and religious discord, or in the fields of blood and slaughter, without ever attending to their conduct and condition, in the more permanent and peaceful scenes of social life? Are we now in possession of prodigious stores of natural, moral, and religious knowledge; of a vast variety of elegant and useful arts; of an almost unbounded trade, which pours the productions of every climate at our feet, to all which our forefathers were once strangers? And have we no curiosity to know, at what time, by what degrees, and by whose means, we have been enriched with these treasures of learning, arts, and commerce? It is impossible. Such curiosity is natural, laudable, and useful; and it is hoped, that this attempt to gratify it, by comprehending these important objects within the bounds of history, will be received by the Public with some degree of favour.

As by this plan the sphere of history is <sup>2d advantage.</sup> very much enlarged, so its order and regularity are not only preserved, but even very much improved; and, by this means, the reader is presented with variety without confusion, which is of all things the most agree-

able. Writers of the greatest genius find it no easy task to form civil, military, and ecclesiastical affairs, into one easy, clear, and unperplexed narration. It is sometimes almost indispensably necessary to break off the thread of one story, before it is brought to a proper period, in order to introduce and bring forward another, of a very different kind. This unavoidably occasions some confusion. The reader's attention is diverted, the gratification of his curiosity is disagreeably suspended, and it is sometimes so long before he is brought back to his former track, that it is hardly possible for him to recollect the scattered members of the same narration, and to form distinct conceptions of the whole. Examples of some degree of perplexity, proceeding from this cause, might be produced (if it were not unnecessary and invidious) from the works of our most justly admired historians: and the compilation of many others are, on this account, little better than a heap of undigested materials. For this reason, it would have been equally absurd and vain, to have attempted to form all the various subjects which compose the following work, into one continued narration. This could have produced nothing but a perfect

chaos of confusion. But by the present plan, all this danger of intricacy and confusion is avoided. The materials belonging to one subject are divided, without violence or injury, from those belonging to another ; and each of them are formed into a separate narration, which is conducted, from beginning to end, without interruption, or the intervention of any foreign matter. By this means, every thing appears distinct and clear ; and the reader pursues one subject to an end, before he enters upon another.

It will probably appear to many readers <sup>5d advantage.</sup> no small advantage, that by this plan they will have an opportunity of indulging their peculiar tastes, and of studying, with the greatest attention, those particular subjects in the history of their country, which seem to them most useful and agreeable in themselves, or most suitable to their respective ways of life, without being obliged to travel through long and tedious details of other things, for which they have little relish. The soldier, for example, and those who take delight in reading of battles, sieges, and military operations, will find every thing of that nature in the several first chapters, and in the

section on the art of war in the fifth chapters. The clergy and others, who desire to be particularly informed of the religious sentiments and practices of the people of this country in every age, and to know the various changes and revolutions which have happened in the churches of Britain, from the first introduction of Christianity, to the present times; will obtain all the satisfaction which this work can give them on these heads, by perusing the second chapters. The politician, the lawyer, the gentleman, and all others who wish to be acquainted with the many changes which have been made in the constitution, government, and laws of their country, in that long succession of ages which have elapsed since the first invasion of the Romans, will have recourse to the third chapters, for the gratification of their curiosity on these subjects. The several fourth chapters will afford the most agreeable and useful entertainment to the scholar; the fifth to the artist; and the sixth to the merchant. The subjects which are treated of in the several seventh chapters are so many and various, and have been so little attended to in history, that it is hoped these

chapters will be universally agreeable, and that readers of every class will find something in them suited to their taste.

It is not perhaps one of the least advantages of this plan, that it obliges the writer to give a constant anxious attention to every part of his subject, in every period, without omission or relaxation. When a few incidental observations only are to be made on some subjects, such as laws, learning, arts, commerce, and manners, as it were by the by, no very great or constant attention to these subjects is required in the writer. The consideration of them may be dropped and resumed by him at pleasure, without his incurring any blame, or disappointing the expectation of his reader. But when a writer, by the very plan of his work, obliges himself to give a distinct continued narration on every one of these subjects, in every period, in its proper place and order; more diligence in collecting, and more care in arranging his materials, on all these subjects, becomes indispensably necessary. In this case, if but any one particular subject, under any one general head (as that of agriculture, for example, in the history of arts), is omitted, or even superficially treated, in any one

4th advantage.



period, it is a direct violation of the established plan, a manifest defect and imperfection, which can hardly escape the observation of any attentive reader. For the more perfectly regular any plan is, the more exact and constant attention is required in the execution of it, and the more easily are its defects discovered.

But enough, perhaps too much, hath been already said of the probable and expected advantages of the plan of the intended work. This is a topic on which it doth not very well become an author to dilate. For since it is the undoubted prerogative of the reader to judge for himself, with freedom and candour, both of the plan and execution; it would be paying but an ill compliment to his penetration, and even to the work itself, to suppose that it was necessary to give a long minute detail of its advantages.

Caution.

Nothing can be more inconsistent with that perfect integrity, and sacred regard to truth, which are so essential to the character of a good historian, than to attempt to raise expectations in the public, which an author is not able, or doth not design, to gratify. To prevent all suspicions of anything of that kind, on the present occasion, it is proper to

acquaint the reader, that he is not to expect a thorough minute investigation of all the various subjects which are introduced into the following work. To have attempted this, would have swelled this history into a library, and would have rendered many parts of it equally tedious and unintelligible to the bulk of readers. In the several fourth chapters, for example, which contain the history of learning, it was never intended to give regular extended systems of the grammar, logic, ethics, mathematics, and other sciences, of every age. In some ages, this would have been impossible ; in all, it would have been improper. It is only designed to lay before the reader a clear and concise account of the general state of each science ; its decline or progress ; its most remarkable defects, and most important improvements. This is all that falls within the province of general history, on subjects of this nature—all that can be universally useful and agreeable, or reasonably desired and expected in a work of this kind.

A modern author, who writes the history of ancient times, can have no personal know-  
Autho-  
rities.  
 ledge of the events of which he writes ; and consequently he can have no title to the credit

and confidence of the Public, merely on his own authority. If he does not write romance instead of history, he must have received his information from tradition—from authentic monuments—original records—or the memoirs of more ancient writers; and therefore, it is but just to acquaint his readers from whence he actually received it. This is acting a fair and honest part, and puts it in the power of his readers to determine, whether he hath represented matters with judgment and integrity, according to his information, and what degree of credit is due to his authorities.

A writer who neglects to do this, may perhaps be an honest man and a sincere historian; but it is certainly very difficult to discover whether he is so or not; and this very neglect is no small temptation to write sometimes in a careless manner; or, on some occasions, to sacrifice truth to embellishment, and to add circumstances for which there is no foundation, in order to make his story appear more agreeable or more surprising. The truth is, the works of an historian who hath not quoted his authorities, and pointed out the sources from whence he hath derived his information (unless he hath been an original writer, and nearly contemporary with the

facts which he relates), are of little or no use to any subsequent writer, and can give but little satisfaction to any inquisitive reader. For these reasons the authorities are carefully quoted, in the following work, at the bottom of the page. When any well known and undisputed fact is mentioned by many ancient writers, it would have had the appearance of parade and ostentation to have quoted them all; and therefore, to point out one or two of them is thought sufficient.

Instead of long notes at the bottom of the page, which are apt to distract the attention of the reader, an Appendix is subjoined to each book of the following work. These appendixes contain a great variety of materials of different kinds—as, scarce and curious tracts—valuable remains of antiquity—original letters and records—short dissertations on important points, &c. &c. In a word, whatever may serve to gratify the reader's curiosity, to remove his doubts, and give him either pleasure or instruction, which could not be introduced into the body of each book, with propriety and advantage, is inserted in the Appendix, with proper references. Appendix.

Maps.

It is hardly possible to form clear conceptions of many events recorded in history, particularly of many military operations, without some knowledge of the face of the country, and of the situation of the places which have been the scenes of these events.

The want of this is one great cause that so many read history with so little satisfaction and improvement. This knowledge is most easily obtained by the inspection of correct maps, which are certainly the best illustrations, and the most useful ornaments, of history. But even the most accurate and splendid maps of such a country as Britain, in its present state, would contribute very little to the illustration of its ancient history. For not only the inhabitants, but the very names, appearances, and other circumstances of our country, and of its various districts, have suffered many successive changes in a long course of ages. To say nothing of the uncertain conjecture of several writers—*that this island was once united to the continent* ; \* in how many different ways and proportions hath Great Britain been divided at different

\* Antonius Volscius, Dominicus Marius Niger, Servius Honoratus, Jo. Twinc, Guil. Musgrave, &c.



times? How often have the same places changed their own names, and the names of their rulers, owners, and inhabitants? How many cities, towns, and fortresses have flourished in one age, the subject of much ambitious contention, and, in another, have sunk into dust and rubbish; while others, formerly unheard of, have arisen to splendour and importance? Have not extensive regions, which in one period had been covered with impenetrable forests, been cleared and peopled in another, and become the scenes of many important events? To give the reader therefore as distinct a view as possible of these successive changes in the scene of action, the first and second books of the following work will be illustrated with maps, representing the face of our country, not as it now is, but as it then was, in these several periods. These maps are inserted in the Appendix to each book, and accompanied with proper explanations.

Thus much it is thought necessary to inform the reader, concerning the plan and structure of the following work. The Public are the only proper judges of the execution; and to them that province is left entire.



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OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME.

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THE  
HISTORY  
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BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

THE CIVIL AND MILITARY HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN,  
FROM THE FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS,  
UNDER JULIUS CÆSAR, A. A. C. 55, TO THE ARRIVAL  
OF THE SAXONS, A. D. 449.

THE large and beautiful Island of Great Britain had been inhabited many ages ; and had no doubt been the scene of many wars, revolutions, and other important events, before it was invaded by the Romans under Julius Cæsar. \* But almost all these events are either buried in profound oblivion ; or the accounts which we have of them are so imperfect, improbable, and full of fables, that it is impossible to form them into a continued, unbroken

A. A. C.  
55.

Ancient  
history of  
Britain  
fabulous.

\* See the third chapter of this book ; the first part of which, containing a description of the ancient British nations, will throw much light on the civil and military history of this period.



A. A. C.  
55.



narration, supported by proper evidence. \*

Leaving therefore those dark and fabulous ages of the British history, which preceded the first invasion of the Romans, to the laborious researches of the industrious antiquarian, we shall begin our narrative at that period, where we meet with clear and authentic information.

Cæsar's  
motives  
for in-  
vading  
Britain.

Julius Cæsar, whose character and exploits are well known to all who are acquainted with the Roman history, having made great progress in the conquest of Gaul, began to cast an ambitious eye on the adjacent isle of Britain, and to think of adding this little sequestered world also to the Roman empire. He is said to have been prompted to form this design, by the beauty and magnitude of the British pearls, which he greatly admired; and to have been provoked by the assistance which some of the British nations had given to his enemies in Gaul. † But his restless unbounded ambition was probably his strongest incentive to this undertaking.

Cæsar en-  
deavours  
to get in-  
telligence.

Britain, though at no great distance from the Continent, was at this time an unknown region to the Romans, and almost to all the rest of mankind. ‡ In order therefore to get some intelligence of the state of the country which he designed to invade, Cæsar convened, from different parts of Gaul, a great number of merchants who had visited this island, on account of

\* Gaulfrid. Monomut. passim.

† Sueton. in vita. Jul. Cæs. c. 47. Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 4. c. 18.

‡ Dio. Cass. l. 59.

trade ; and asked them many questions concerning its dimensions ; the number, power, and customs of its inhabitants ; their art of war ; their harbours which were fit to receive large ships, &c. But these merchants, being either not able, or not willing, to give him sufficient information, he despatched C. Volusenus with a galley, to get some intelligence, and to return with it as soon as possible. In the mean time, he himself marched with his whole army into the territories of the Morini, and collected a large fleet in the ports of that country ; that all things might be ready for the embarkation, as soon as Volusenus returned. \*

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55.

Some of the British states having received notice of the impending storm, from the merchants of Gaul, they endeavoured to divert it, by sending over ambassadors to make their submissions to the authority of Rome, and to offer hostages for their fidelity. Cæsar gave these ambassadors a very kind reception ; and having exhorted them to continue in their present dispositions, he sent them back to Britain, with Comius, whom he had constituted King of the Atrebatians, in their company. † To Comius, on whose prudence and fidelity he very much depended, he gave instructions, to visit as many of the British states as he could ; to persuade

Britons  
send am-  
bassadors  
to Cæsar.

\* The Morini inhabited the seacoast about Calais and Bologne.

† The Atrebatians were an ancient Belgic nation who inhabited Artois. See chap. 3, sect. 1. ¶ 5.

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55.

them to enter into an alliance with the Romans (a soft inoffensive name for becoming their subjects); and to let them know, that Cæsar designed, as soon as possible, to come over in person to their island. \*

Cæsar embarks his infantry, and arrives in Britain.

The season being now far advanced, and C. Volusenus being returned from viewing the British coast, and having communicated his discoveries, Cæsar embarked the infantry of two legions, on board eighty transports, at one port (supposed to be Calais), and commanded the cavalry of these legions to embark at another harbour at about eight miles distance, on board eighteen transports. The embarkation of the infantry being finished, and the wind springing up fair, Cæsar sailed with the fleet under his immediate command about one in the morning, and reached the coast of Britain, near Dover, at ten in the forenoon of the same day, being the 26th of August, in the 55th year before the beginning of the Christian era. Some accident or mismanagement prevented the transports with the cavalry from sailing till four days after. †

Cæsar lands his troops after a vigorous opposition.

As those submissions, whatever they were, which the British states had made to Cæsar by their ambassadors, had not answered their design of diverting him from his intended expedition, they changed their measures, and resolved upon a vigorous defence of their country. In consequence of this resolution, they imprisoned

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 4. c. 18, 19, &c.

† Ibid. c. 20, 21. Philosoph. Transact. No. 193.

Comius, Prince of the Atrebatians, and his attendants; raised a numerous army, and marched to that part of the coast where they expected the descent would be attempted. When Cæsar therefore approached the British shore, observing the lofty cliffs covered with an army, and that the place was not fit for landing in the face of an enemy, he resolved to lie by for some time. In this interval, he communicated to his principal officers the discoveries which C. Volusenus had made, gave them all the necessary orders for the debarkation, and exhorted them to observe his signals, and to do every thing with all possible readiness and despatch. The wind and tide being both favourable, he made the signal for weighing anchor about three in the afternoon; and, after sailing about eight miles farther, he stopped over against a plain and open shore, probably at or near Deal.\* Here he determined to land his army without delay; though the British army, which had attended all his motions, stood ready to give him a warm reception. The Roman soldiers had many and great difficulties to encounter on this occasion, arising from the depth of the water, which struck them breast high, the weight of their armour, and the assaults of the enemy, who perfectly knew the ground, and fought with great advantage. Cæsar observing that his men were a little daunted with these difficulties, and did not advance with their

A. A. C.  
55.

\* Dio. l. 39. Cæs. l. 4. c. 21.

A. A. C.  
55.



usual spirit, commanded some gallies, which drew less water than the transport ships, to approach the shore, and attack the enemy in flank, with their engines, slings, and arrows. The Britons, astonished at the shape and motion of the gallies, and playing of the engines, first halted, and then began to give back. But still many of the Roman soldiers hesitated to leave their ships and encounter at once the waves and the enemy: when the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, having first invoked the Gods, jumped into the sea, and, advancing with the eagle towards the enemy, cried aloud; "Follow me, my fellow-soldiers, unless you will betray the Roman eagle into the hands of the enemy; for my part, I am determined to discharge my duty to Cæsar and the commonwealth." All who beheld this bold action, and heard this animating speech, were fired with courage and emulation, plunged into the sea, and advanced towards the shore. Now ensued a fierce and bloody shock, between the Romans struggling eagerly to gain the land, and the Britons labouring with no less ardour to repulse them. At length, Cæsar sending constant supplies in small boats, to such of his men as were hardest pressed, they gained ground by degrees, obliged the Britons to retire, and the whole army landed.\*

The Britons make their submissions,

The unhappy Britons, discouraged by the ill success of their attempt to prevent the landing of

\* Cæs. l. 4. . 22, 23, 24.



the Romans, began to think of renewing their submissions, and obtaining peace. In order to this, they released Comius the Atrebatian from his confinement, and sent him, in company with their ambassadors, to Cæsar. These ambassadors made the best excuse they could for the violence which had been done to Comius, throwing the blame of it on the unruly multitude; they professed an entire submission to the commands of their conqueror, and offered hostages for a security. Cæsar, having reproached them for the violation of their former engagements, granted them peace, and ordered them to send him a certain number of hostages. Some of these hostages were immediately sent; and the rest promised, as soon as they could be brought from the places of their residence, which were at some distance. In the mean time, the British army separated; the chiefs of the several nations repaired to Cæsar's camp, to settle their own affairs, and those of their respective states. \*

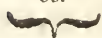
A. A. C.  
55.and obtain  
peace.

This peace was concluded on the fourth day after Cæsar's arrival in Britain; and on the same day his transports with the cavalry sailed with a gentle gale. But when they approached the British shore, and were even within sight of the Roman camp, a violent storm arose, which prevented their landing, and obliged them to put back into different ports of the Continent. Nor was this the only injury which Cæsar sustained

A storm.

\* Cæs. l. 4. c. 25.

A. A. C.  
55.



from this storm ; for it being full moon, and spring tides, his gallies, which were drawn up on the strand, were filled with water, and the transports which lay at anchor in the road were some of them dashed to pieces, and others of them so much damaged as to be unfit for sailing. This was a very great disaster; and the Romans, seeing themselves at once destitute of provisions to subsist them on the island, and of ships to carry them out of it, were seized with a general consternation. \*

Britons re-  
new the  
war,

If the Romans beheld these scenes of desolation with dismay, the Britons viewed them with secret joy. Their chiefs who were in Cæsar's camp, held private consultations together ; and, observing the small number of the Roman forces, and that they had neither corn, cavalry, nor ships, they began to entertain the most sanguine hopes of being able to destroy this little army, either by force or famine ; and thereby defeating the present, and preventing all future attempts upon their island. Full of these hopes, they retired by degrees, and under various pretences, from the Roman camp, repaired to their respective states, collected their followers, and animated them to renew the war.

Action be-  
tween the  
Romans  
and Bri-  
tons.

Though Cæsar was not fully apprized of their designs, yet observing their affected delays in bringing in the hostages, and considering his own condition, he began to suspect that something

was in agitation, and resolved to provide against the worst. He employed one part of his army in repairing his fleet, and the other in bringing corn into the camp. The harvest was now all gathered in, except one field, in which, as the soldiers of the seventh legion were one day foraging, they were assaulted by a great multitude of British cavalry and chariots, who rushed out upon them from the adjacent woods. The Romans, confounded at the suddenness and unexpectedness of this attack, were thrown into confusion, some of them slain, and the rest surrounded, and in the greatest danger of being cut in pieces; when they were delivered by the sagacity and alertness of their general. For Cæsar being informed that an uncommon cloud of dust appeared on that side where the legion was foraging, and suspecting what had happened, took the two cohorts which were upon guard, and flew to the place; leaving orders for the rest of the army to follow. When Cæsar came to the scene of action, he found his troops in the most imminent danger. But they, being encouraged by this seasonable relief, redoubled their efforts, and put the Britons to a stand. This contented Cæsar for the present, who, not thinking it prudent to bring on a general engagement, stood facing the enemy for some time, and then led back the legions to the camp.\*

The continual rains which followed, prevented any further action in the field for some days.

Another  
action.

\* Cæs. l. 4. c. 27, 28, 29, 30.

A. A. C.  
55.

— This time was employed by the Britons in sending messengers into all parts, to inform their countrymen of the small number and distressful state of the Roman troops; and to exhort them to embrace the present favourable opportunity of enriching themselves with the spoils of their enemies, and of destroying the invaders of their country. Such multitudes complied with these exhortations, that they got together so great an army, both of horse and foot, as emboldened them to approach the Roman camp, with a design to force its entrenchments. But Cæsar, not waiting for the assault, drew up his legions before the camp, and fell upon the Britons with such fury, that they could not long sustain the shock. The Romans having pursued the fugitives for some time with great slaughter, and desolated the surrounding country, returned victorious to their camp.\*

Cæsar  
makes  
peace with  
the Bri-  
tons, and  
returns to  
Gaul.

The Britons, again disheartened by their defeat, sent ambassadors that same day to Cæsar to sue for peace. This was granted without delay, and on no harder conditions than doubling the number of hostages, which were to be sent after him into Gaul. This facility of Cæsar proceeded from his impatience to leave the island before winter, which was now approaching. Having now refitted his fleet with the loss of no more than twelve ships, he embarked his army with all possible expedition; and, after a stay of little more than three weeks in Britain,

\* Cæs. l. 1. c. 50, 51.



he set sail and arrived safe in Gaul.\* Thus ended Cæsar's first expedition into Britain; which, though it was extolled by his partisans at Rome, as one of the most glorious and wonderful exploits, was really attended with little honour, and less advantage.† His retreat at this time appears to have been exceedingly precipitate, and his own manner of relating it is so very short and summary, that we can hardly help suspecting that there are some material circumstances suppressed. However this may be, he gave so specious a representation of his expedition in his letters to the Roman senate, that a supplication of twenty days was decreed to his honour.

A. A. C.  
55.

As soon as Cæsar arrived in Gaul, he began to make preparations for a second expedition into Britain, which he designed to undertake the next year, at a more early season, and with a much more formidable army. In order to this, before he left his winter-quarters to go into Italy, as was his yearly custom, he gave orders to his lieutenants to repair his old ships, and to build as many new ones as possible, during the winter. He also gave directions to build these ships lower, broader, and lighter than usual; that they might draw less water, approach nearer the shore, and be more convenient for embarking and landing his troops, especially his cavalry. These orders were executed with so much diligence, that, at his return out of Italy in the spring, he

A. A. C.  
54.  
Cæsar  
makes  
prepara-  
tion for a  
second ex-  
pedition  
into Bri-  
tain.

\* Cæs. l. 4, c. 52.

† Dio. l. 50.



A. A. C.  
54.

found no fewer than six hundred transports, of the construction which he had prescribed, and twenty-eight gallies, almost ready for launching. He bestowed the highest praises on his lieutenants and soldiers, for their great activity in this service ; and having left a sufficient number of men, to finish his ships, and conduct them to the general rendezvous at Portus Itius, now Calais, he led the rest of his army against the Treviri, or people of Treves. \*

Cæsar  
lands his  
army in  
Britain.

Cæsar having brought the Treviri to submission, marched his army to Portus Itius, where he found all his fleet (except about forty ships which had been disabled in a storm) completely rigged and ready to sail. At this place he was met, according to his orders, by all the cavalry, and chief nobility of the several estates of Gaul. The greatest part of the nobility he determined to carry with him into Britain, to prevent their raising commotions in his absence. Having spent about three weeks here, in settling the affairs of Gaul, embarking his troops, and waiting for a fair wind, he sailed one evening about sunset, probably in the month of May or June, with a gallant army of five legions and two thousand horse, on board a fleet consisting of more than eight hundred ships. The wind being south-west, and the tide retiring, the fleet fell too far to the north-east during the night ; but next morning, the soldiers plying the oars with great

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 1, 2, 3.

vigour, and being assisted by the returning tide, they gained the coast of Britain about noon, at the same place where they had landed the year before. \* Here he disembarked the whole army without delay or opposition. For though the Britons had received early intelligence of the mighty preparations which were making for a second invasion of their island, and had formed a strong confederacy, and collected a powerful army for its defence; yet when they beheld this prodigious fleet approaching their coasts, they were struck with consternation, despaired of being able to prevent the landing, and retired some miles up the country.

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Cæsar having landed his troops, and received information from some prisoners where the Britons lay, he left only ten cohorts and three hundred horse upon the coast, under Q. Atrius, to guard his fleet, and set out that very evening in quest of the enemy, with all the rest of his army. After a fatiguing march of twelve hours, mostly in the night, he came in sight of the British army, which was posted behind a river, probably the Stour, on some rising grounds; and from thence they attacked the Romans, and endeavoured to prevent their passing the river. But the cavalry having cleared the way, the whole army passed; and the Britons retired towards some adjacent woods, into a place strongly fortified both by art and nature, perhaps where

Two actions between the Romans and Britons.

\* Cæs. l. 5. c. 4, 5. 7.

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54. } Canterbury now stands. In this fastness the Britons lay close for some time, and only sallied out in small parties. But the soldiers of the seventh legion, advancing under cover of their shields, and having cast up a mount, forced the intrenchments without much loss, and obliged the enemy to abandon the place. Cæsar did not think it prudent to permit any pursuit at so late an hour, and in a country so much unknown; but recalling his men, he employed the remainder of the evening in fortifying his camp. \*

A storm. Early next morning this active, indefatigable general renewed his operations; and having divided his army into three bodies, sent them in pursuit of the enemy. When they had marched a little way, and had discovered the rear of the British army, a party of horse arrived with despatches from Q. Atrius to Cæsar, acquainting him, that a dreadful storm had arisen the night before, and had fallen upon the fleet with so much fury, that it had driven almost all the ships ashore, after they had sustained unspeakable damage by running foul of one another. As soon as he received this unwelcome news, he recalled his troops from the pursuit of the enemy, and marched with all expedition to the seacoast. When he arrived there, he found his fleet in as bad a condition as it had been represented. Forty ships were entirely destroyed, and the rest so much damaged that they were hardly reparable. He

\* Cas. l. 5. c. 8. Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 14.

immediately set all the carpenters in his fleet and army to work, sent for others from Gaul, and despatched orders to Labienus, his lieutenant there, to build as many ships as possible. Cæsar, being now convinced by his repeated losses, that there was no safety for his fleet in riding at anchor in the open road, determined to draw all his ships on shore, and enclose them within the fortifications of his camp. Though this was a work of prodigious labour and difficulty, yet, by the vigorous and incessant toil of the whole army, it was accomplished in the short space of ten days. Having thus repaired and secured his fleet, and left it under the same guard as before, he marched his army to the place where he had desisted from the pursuit of the enemy. \*

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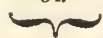
It is very surprising that the Britons gave the Romans no disturbance while they were repairing their fleet. It appears that they were employed in this interval in strengthening their confederacy, increasing their army, and in choosing a commander in chief, that they might exert their force with greater union and effect. The choice fell upon Cassibelanus, Prince of the Cassi or Cattivellauni, † who had the chief command and administration of the war conferred upon him by common consent. This was in some respects a wise and prudent, and in others an unhappy, choice. For Cassibelanus was a prince

Cassibelanus chosen generalissimo of the Britons.

\* Cæs. I. 5. c. 9.

† The ancient inhabitants of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Buckinghamshire.

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of great courage and military experience, and was at the head of one of the most warlike and powerful tribes in the confederacy ; but he and his subjects had been engaged in continual wars with some of the neighbouring states, which could not but weaken the attachment of these states to the person of the commander, and to the common cause. \* The Britons, however, under this new leader, waited the approach of the Romans with undaunted countenances.

Several ac-  
tions be-  
tween the  
Romans  
and Bri-  
tons.

As soon as the hostile armies drew near to each other, they began to skirmish. The British horse, supported by their chariots, charged the Roman cavalry with great vigour. They were repulsed, indeed, or pretended to be so, when the Romans, pursuing with too much eagerness, sustained a considerable loss. Some time after these first skirmishes, as the Romans were one day employed in fortifying their camp, the Britons sallied out upon them from the adjacent woods, routed the advanced guard, defeated two choice cohorts, which were sent to the assistance of the guard, killed Q. Laberius Durus, military tribune, and at last retired without loss. By this last action, which happened within view of the camp, Cæsar and his whole army were convinced, that they had a dangerous enemy to deal with, who were equally brisk in their attacks, quick in their retreats, and sudden in turning upon their pursuers. The day after this action, the Britons

\* Cæs. Bell. Gall. l. 5. c. 9.



appeared upon the hills, at a greater distance, in smaller bodies, and seemed less forward to skirmish than usual. This encouraged Cæsar to send out three legions, with all his cavalry, to forage, under the command of C. Trebonius his lieutenant. About noon, the Britons rushed suddenly from the surrounding woods upon the foragers. But here they met with a more vigorous resistance than they expected; and being repulsed, the Roman cavalry, supported by their foot, pursued them with such order and firmness, that they had no opportunity of practising their usual stratagems, and were at length entirely broken and dispersed. \*

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The Britons had no sooner received this severe check, than their ill-cemented union began to dissolve; and such of the confederates as lay at a distance from immediate danger, abandoned the common cause, and retired to their own homes. Cassibelanus, discouraged by this defection of his allies, and convinced that his troops were not a match for the Romans in pitched battles, resolved to retire into his own territories, and stand on the defensive. †

Defections  
among the  
Britons.

Cæsar, who had not as yet penetrated far into the country, now seeing no enemy to oppose him, advanced towards the Thames, with a design to pass that river, and make war on Cassibelanus in his own kingdom. When he reached the Thames, at a place called Coway-stakes, he saw

Cæsar  
passeth the  
Thames.

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. c. 12, 13.

† Id. ibid. c. 12, 13.

A. A. C. the enemy drawn up in great numbers on the  
 54. opposite banks, which were also fortified with sharp stakes; and he was informed by prisoners and deserters, that many stakes of the same kind were driven into the bed of the river. Not discouraged by all these obstacles, he commanded the cavalry to ford the river, and the infantry to follow close after, though it was so deep that their heads only appeared above the water. The Britons, astonished at the boldness of this attempt, after a feeble resistance, abandoned the banks, and fled. \*

War chariots.

Cassibelanus, now observing that the greatest part of his troops, especially his infantry, were so much dispirited, that they were of little use, dismissed them; and retained only the war-chariots of his army, amounting to four thousand, about his person. With this small, but formidable body, he watched all the motions of the Roman army, harassed them in their marches, and frequently sallied from the woods upon their foraging and plundering parties. This not only annoyed the enemy, but preserved the country from devastation. For Cæsar, observing the dangers to which his cavalry were exposed, when they ventured to make excursions into the fields, would not permit them to remove to any great distance from the legions, nor to pillage the country, unless when they were supported by the infantry. †

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. c. 14.

† Id. ibid. c. 15.

But the want of a cordial union among the British states, and the secret rancour which some of them entertained against Cassibelanus for former injuries, defeated all the efforts of that general. The Trinobantes,\* in particular, retained a deep resentment against him, for his having slain their prince Imanuentius, and obliged his son Mandubratius to fly into Gaul to avoid the same fate. As soon, therefore, as Cæsar approached their confines, they sent ambassadors to him, with offers of obedience and submission, and to implore his protection against the violence of Cassibelanus, and to entreat him to restore Mandubratius (who was then in his army) to the government of their state. Cæsar accepted of their submissions, granted their requests, and, having demanded and obtained forty hostages, and a quantity of corn for his army, he took them under his protection, and secured their persons and properties from all injuries. This induced many of the neighbouring states, as the Cenimagni, Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci, and Cassi,† to send ambassadors to Cæsar to make their submissions, which were accepted with the same facility.‡

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Several  
British  
states  
make  
peace with  
Cæsar.

Cæsar derived great advantages from the submission of so many British states. Amongst other things, they gave him intelligence, that he was not far from the capital of Cassibelanus, into

Capital of  
Cassibela-  
nus taken.

\* See chap. 3. sect. 1. People of Essex, Middlesex, and Surrey.

† See chap. 5. sect. 1.

‡ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 16, 17.

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which great multitudes of men and cattle had retired for safety. This town, which was little more than a wood with a number of straggling villages in it, and surrounded with a ditch and rampart, was situated where the flourishing city of Verulamium afterwards stood, and near where the town of St Albans now stands. \* Though this place was very strong both by art and nature, Cæsar soon made himself master of it, and of a great booty in cattle and prisoners which he found in it. †

The Britons make an unsuccessful attempt on the Roman camp.

Cassibelanus, not yet dispirited by the defection of his allies, the loss of his capital, and all his other losses, formed a scheme, which, if it had been as successfully executed as it was prudently planned, would have involved the Romans in very great difficulties. This artful general, observing that Cæsar was now at a great distance from his fleet, which he had left under a weak guard, he formed the design of destroying it. With this view, he sent messengers to Cingetorix, Carmilius, Taximagulus, and Segonax, the four chieftains of the Cantii, to draw all their forces together, and fall suddenly on the naval camp of the Romans, which was in their country. ‡ These chieftains obeyed his orders, and assaulted the Roman camp; but were repulsed with great loss, and Cingetorix was taken prisoner. §

\* Camb. Brit. p. 550.

† See chap. 5. sect. 1.

‡ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 17.

§ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 18.

Cassibelanus, who had discharged all the duties of a general and a patriot with great courage and abilities, seeing all his schemes miscarry, was now convinced that it would be in vain to struggle any longer. He determined, therefore, to make his peace on the easiest terms he could; and for this purpose he sent ambassadors to Cæsar, and also employed the mediation of Comius the Atrebatian, to whom he had probably done some friendly offices, when he was a prisoner amongst the Britons. These advances from Cassibelanus were highly agreeable to Cæsar, who seems to have been heartily tired of his British expedition, and earnestly desirous of returning to the Continent, where he dreaded some commotion. The ambassadors, therefore, found little difficulty in their negotiation; and a peace was soon concluded on these terms—that Cassibelanus should offer no injury to Mandubratius, or his subjects the Trinobantes—that Britain should give a certain number of hostages, and pay a certain yearly tribute to the Romans. \* Neither the number of hostages, nor the nature or quantity of the tribute stipulated by this treaty, are mentioned by Cæsar. It seems indeed probable, that he insisted upon these stipulations, rather with a view to save his own honour, and the honour of the Roman name, than from any expectation that they would be performed. We should have been very glad, however, to have known what kind,

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Cassibelanus makes his peace with Cæsar.

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 19.



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Caesar re-  
turns with  
his army  
into Gaul,

and what quantity of tribute Britain was capable of affording at this early period.

The peace being now concluded, Caesar marched his army back to the seacoast, and immediately gave orders for launching his fleet, which he found completely repaired. But he had lost so many ships in the late storm, and had received so few from Gaul (those built by Labienus having been mostly put back or destroyed in their passage), that he had not a sufficient number to contain his whole army, together with his hostages and prisoners, which were very numerous. Rather than stay to build more ships, or wait for them from the Continent, he resolved to transport his troops, &c. at two embarkations. So great was the good fortune of this general, that he did not lose so much as one ship which had soldiers on board, in any of his two British expeditions, though several empty ones, particularly many of those employed in the first embarkation, were lost in their return to Britain. Caesar, with the last division of his army, set sail about ten at night, and arrived safe, with his whole fleet, on the continent of Gaul, by day-break the next morning, being September 26th, in the 54th year before the beginning of the Christian era. \*

Sentiments  
of several  
authors on  
Caesar's

Such is the account given by Caesar himself, (who was one of the most elegant writers, as well as one of the most illustrious warriors, of anti-

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 19. Cicero, Epist. ad Atticum, l. 4. ep. 17.



quity), of his two expeditions into Britain. Some of his cotemporaries have insinuated, that in his Commentaries he did not very strictly adhere to truth, but set his own actions in too fair a light. \* Nor is this, considering his excessive love of fame, a very improbable suspicion. But even from this account it appears, that he had no great reason to boast of his success in Britain. For after he had been at an immense expense, and had exposed himself and his army to many toils and dangers, he abandoned the island at last, without having erected a single fort upon it, or left a single cohort in it to secure his conquest. The other ancient writers speak of these expeditions of Cæsar into Britain very differently, as they were well or ill affected to his fame and person. On the one hand, Velleius Paterculus says, that Cæsar passed twice through Britain;† which cannot be true, because it appears from his own account, that in his first expedition he never left the seacoast; and in his second, he never penetrated farther into the country than about St Albans. The historians, Diodorus Siculus, Suetonius, and Eutropius, speak of Cæsar's exploits in Britain, in terms which might imply that he conquered it, and made it tributary.‡ But these expressions are evidently too strong, if they mean any more than that he gained some victories in Britain, and imposed a tribute (which

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two expeditions  
into Britain.

\* Sueton. l. 1. c. 56. in Jul. Cæsar. † Vel. Pater. l. 2. c. 47.

‡ Diod. Sicul. l. 5. c. 8. Sueton. in Jul. Cæs. c. 25. Eutrop. l. 6. c. 14.

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54.

was probably never paid) on a few British states. On the other hand, Dio says, "That Cæsar "gained nothing either to himself or to the "state, by his expeditions into Britain;" and Strabo, "That he did nothing great in Britain, "nor penetrated far into the island." \* Tacitus makes Boadicea and Caractacus say, in their harangues to their armies, long after, "That "the Romans would fly and leave the island as "the deified Julius had done, if they emulated "the bravery of their ancestors,—and invoked "the names of their ancestors who had expelled "Cæsar the dictator." † The reproach which Lucan puts into the mouth of Pompey on this subject is well known.‡ But Q. Cicero (who was with Cæsar in his second expedition) seems to speak most impartially of this matter in a private letter to his brother. "The British affairs (says he) afford no foundation either for "much fear or much joy." § The truth is, that though Cæsar acted in these expeditions with his usual wisdom and courage, yet he was at last convinced that no conquests could then be made in Britain, which would compensate the expense, the difficulty, and danger of making them; and therefore he left it, with a resolution never to return; and the many bustling bloody scenes in

\* Dio, l. 59. p. 115. Strabo, l. 4. p. 200.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 15. Annal. l. 12. c. 54.

‡ Territa quæsitis ostendit terga Britannis. Lucan, l. 2. v. 572.

§ Cic. Epist. l. 5. epist. 1.

which he was afterwards engaged on the Continent, confirmed him in that resolution.

After the departure of Julius Cæsar, there follows a long blank, of near one hundred years, in the history of Britain, which cannot be filled up in any tolerable manner. Even the fertile imagination of Jeffrey of Monmouth fails him on this occasion; and all he says of the affairs of Britain, in this long period, is comprised in seven short sentences, in which there is little information and less truth.\* It appears, that as soon as the British nations were delivered from their apprehensions of a foreign enemy, they returned to the prosecution of their internal quarrels and wars against one another. In these wars (of which we know few particulars) Cassibelanus and his successors, and their subjects the Cattivel-launi, still maintained the ascendant, and reduced the Trinobantes, the Dobuni, and several other neighbouring nations under their obedience.† Those British states which had submitted to Cæsar, suffered most in these wars, and probably on that very account. Three of them, the Ancalites, the Bibroci, and the Segontiaci, were so entirely subdued, that they lost their very name and being, as separate states, and are never afterwards mentioned in history. Cunobelinus was in several respects the most illustrious successor of Cassibelanus, and the most powerful of the

A. A. C.  
54.



From  
A. A. C.  
54, to  
A. A. C.  
29.

State of  
Britain  
after the  
departure  
of Cæsar,

\* Gaulfrid. Monumut. l. i. c. 11.

† Dio. l. 49. See chap. 5. sect. 1. p. 4. 6. 9, 10, 11.

From  
A. A. C.  
54. to  
A. A. C.  
29.



British princes of this period. He seems to have arrived at a degree of greatness formerly unknown in this island, and to have been sovereign of the greatest part of South Britain. After his death, his dominions were divided between his widow, the famous Cartismandua, Queen of the Brigantes, and his two sons, Caractacus and Togodumnus, who were the most considerable princes in Britain, when it was again invaded by the Romans, under the Emperor Claudius.

From  
A. A. C.  
29, to  
A. D. 12.  
Augustus.

During this long period of ninety-seven years, from the retreat of Julius to the invasion of Claudius, the Britons met with no disturbance, and with but few alarms from foreign enemies. While the Romans were engaged in the horrors of their civil wars, and for some time after, Britain was entirely neglected by them; and the tribute, which had been imposed by Cæsar, was never paid. Even after Augustus had attained the peaceable possession of the whole Roman empire, he did not think it proper to invade Britain; being probably restrained from it by his favourite maxim, “Never to fish with a golden hook;” *i. e.* never to engage in an enterprise that was likely to be more expensive than profitable.\* This conjecture is confirmed by the observation of Tacitus, that Augustus abstained from invading Britain upon mature deliberation, and from principles of prudence.† But as a few threatenings would cost little, Augustus se-

\* Sueton. vita August. c. 25.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 15.

veral times gave out, that he intended an expedition into Britain. Particularly in the 6th year of his reign, and 25th before the beginning of the Christian era, when he was in Gaul regulating the tribute of that country, he threatened to pass over into Britain for the same purpose. But being suddenly called away from these parts by the Cantabrian war, these threats had no great influence on the British princes. \* About four years after this, when the Roman empire was in a state of great tranquillity, he again threatened to invade Britain; and several of the British nations were so much intimidated by these threats, that they sent ambassadors to Augustus to promise submission, and the payment of the stipulated tribute. † But these promises were but ill performed, except by a few princes who courted the favour and protection of Rome, which obliged Augustus to threaten a third time an invasion of this island; from which also he was diverted, by a revolt of the Byscayans and some other nations. To these intended or rather threatened expeditions of Augustus into Britain, the verses of Horace, the favourite poet of this great emperor, (which are quoted below), undoubtedly refer; and they show at least, that such expeditions were the subject of conversation at the imperial court. ‡ But though this em-

From  
A. A. C.  
29, to  
A. D. 12.

A. A. C.  
21.

\* Dio, l. 49.

† Dio, l. 55.


‡ *Cælo tonantem credidimus Jovem*

*Regnare: præsens Divus habebitur*

*Augustus, adjectis Britannis*

*Imperio.—L. iii. Ode 5.*



A. A. C. 21.  peror never actually invaded, and perhaps never really intended to invade Britain, yet he derived considerable profits from it, arising partly from the presents and tributes of some of its princes who cultivated his friendship, and partly from certain customs which he imposed upon all goods which were either exported from the Continent into this island, or from hence to the Continent. \*

A. D. 15. Tiberius. Tiberius, the son-in-law and successor of Augustus, pursued the same measures with regard to Britain, accepting of such presents, tributes, and customs, as were willingly given, and abstaining from hostilities. † During the reign of this emperor, there seems to have been a good understanding, and an intercourse of friendly offices between the Romans and Britons. For when some of the ships of Germanicus's fleet, which had been dispersed by a dreadful storm, were wrecked on the coast of Britain, the petty princes of that country received and entertained the soldiers with great kindness, and sent them to their general. ‡

A. D. 40. Caligula. Caligula, the nephew and successor of Tiberius, formed a design of invading Britain, if

*Te belluosus, qui remotis*

*Obstrepat Oceanus Britannis,*

*Te non paventes funera Gallie,*

*Duræque tellus audit Iberiæ.—L. iv. Ode 14.*

*Serves iturum Cæsarem in ultimos*

*Orbis Britannos.—L. i. Ode 35.*


\* Strabo, l. 4.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 15.

‡ Tacit. Annal. l. 2. c. 25.

any thing that came into the head of such a frantic wretch can be called a design. He was met upon his march by Adminius, a British prince, who, having been expelled the island by his own father Cunobelinus, now surrendered himself, and the few followers of his desperate fortune, to the Emperor, who was as much elated upon it, as if the whole island, and all its princes, had submitted to his authority. The letters which he wrote to Rome on this occasion were full of the most pompous expressions of his wonderful success; and he commanded the bearers of these letters to drive up to the senate-house, and to deliver them to the consuls in the temple of Mars, in a full assembly of the senators.\* When he reached the seacoast opposite to Britain, with an army of 200,000 men, he acted in a most ridiculous and fantastical manner. For having drawn up his army in order of battle upon the shore, with all the balistæ and other engines of war, he embarked on board a galley, sailed out a little way, and then returning suddenly, he mounted a lofty throne, and from thence gave the word of command to engage. But no enemy appearing, he commanded his soldiers to gather shells upon the shore. For this noble service he highly praised and lavishly rewarded them; the shells, which he styled the spoils of the conquered ocean, he sent to Rome, as the chief ornaments of his triumph for this

\* Sueton. in C. Calig. c. 44.

A.D. 40.  glorious exploit. \* Such a composition of cowardice, vanity, folly, and madness, was this mighty master of the world !

A.D. 43.  
Claudius  
sends an  
army into  
Britain.

But the time was now approaching when Britain was to be invaded in good earnest, and reduced to the same subjection with other nations, to the almost unbounded power of Rome. This calamity was brought upon her by one of her own degenerate and factious sons. It seems to have been a custom in these times, for such persons of distinction as were expelled, or obliged to fly out of this island, to take shelter in the court of Rome. † One of these fugitives, named Bericulus, who had been driven out of the island for sedition, persuaded the Emperor Claudius, the successor of Caligula, to attempt the conquest of Britain. This enterprise being resolved upon, Aulus Plautius, who was of consular dignity, and a general of great wisdom and valour, was commanded to conduct a considerable army out of Gaul into Britain, and begin the war ; with orders to acquaint the Emperor if he met with great opposition, that he might come to his assistance. The soldiers expressed great aversion and reluctance to embark in this expedition, which, they said, was to make war beyond the limits of the world ; so little was Britain still known to the bulk of the Romans, and so frightful were the ideas which they entertained of the country and

\* Sueton. in C. Calig. c. 46. Dio, l. 59. p. 659.

† Sueton. in C. Claud. c. 17.

its inhabitants ! Being at length prevailed upon by Plautius to follow him, he divided them into three distinct bodies, which all arrived safe on the British coast, and landed without opposition.\* This army consisted of four complete legions, with their auxiliaries and cavalry, making about fifty thousand men ; and was commanded under the general, by Vespasian, who was afterwards emperor, Sabinus his brother, and other excellent officers.†

A.D. 43.




The British princes do not seem to have been sufficiently apprehensive of their danger on this occasion, nor to have made suitable preparations for their own defence. We hear of no confederacy formed, no commander in chief elected, nor of any armies raised to guard the coasts. They no doubt had received intelligence of this expedition before it took place ; but they probably flattered themselves, that it would end in empty threats, or in some such ridiculous way as that of Caligula had lately ended. It was also no small misfortune to the Britons, that their great prince Cunobelinus was now dead, and his dominions divided between his widow Cartimunda, and his two sons, Caractacus and Togodumnus, who did not act with that union which their near relation and common danger required. These two princes, however, armed their respective subjects, resolved to stand upon the defensive, and endeavour to protract the war

The Britons do not make proper preparations.

\* Dio, l. 60.

† See Appen. No. 8.

A.D. 43.  till winter, when they hoped that the Roman general would return into Gaul with his army, as Julius Cæsar had formerly done. \*

Several actions between the Britons and the Romans.

Aulus Plautius, having met with no resistance at his landing, nor from any of the British states on the seacoast, marched his army up the country, in quest of those who were in arms. In this march he was, no doubt, guided by Bericus, who knew the country, and led him into those parts where his friends and interest lay; which seems to have been amongst the Cattivellauni and Dobuni.† By the direction of this guide, he first overtook and defeated Caractacus; and, soon after, his brother Togodumnus shared the same fate. After these two successful actions, and the retreat of the British army, a part of the Dobuni submitted to the Romans. These were probably the subjects of Cogidunus, who became so great a favourite of Claudius and succeeding emperors, for his early submission, and steady adherence to their interest. Plautius, having left a garrison in these parts to secure his conquests, advanced in pursuit of the Britons, who had taken shelter behind a river, which they imagined the Romans could not pass, because there were no bridges. But in this they found themselves mistaken; for the Roman general sent over the German auxiliaries in his army, who were such excellent swimmers, that they could pass the most rapid streams in their arms. These Germans did not

\* Dio, l. 60.

† See chap. 5. sect. 1. &c.



indeed attack the Britons; but they did them a great deal of mischief, by wounding and hamstringing many of their chariot-horses. Soon after this, the renowned Vespasian, with his brother Sabinus, at the head of a large body of troops, passed the river, and surprised and slew a great number of the enemy. But such was the steady resolution of the unhappy Britons, that they still maintained their ground, till they were defeated the day after in a general action, which was fought with so much bravery on both sides, that the victory was for some time doubtful. C. Sidius Geta, who was once in great danger of being taken, contributed so much to the obtaining of this victory, that he had triumphal honours conferred upon him, though he had not yet been consul. The Britons, after this great defeat, retired to the north side of the river Thames, which they passed at a place where marshes and stagnating waters, occasioned by the overflowing of the river and the uncultivated state of the country, rendered the passage very difficult and dangerous. But nothing could obstruct the progress of the victorious Romans. The Germans having followed the rout of the enemy, and the rest of the army having passed over a bridge a little higher up the river, they gave the Britons another overthrow; but, pursuing the fugitives too eagerly, they fell into impassable bogs, and lost a great many men.\*

A.D. 43.



\* Dio. l. 60.

A.D. 45.

A. Plau-  
tius retires  
beyond the  
Thames.

The Roman general observing, that though the Britons had received so many defeats, and had lost Togodumnus, one of their princes, they still continued undaunted, and made no proposals of peace or submission, he thought proper to acquaint the Emperor with the state of affairs in Britain, and invite him to come over, and put an end to the war. He then returned with his army to the south side of the river Thames, and remained on the defensive; that he might neither expose himself to any disaster, nor finish the war before the Emperor's arrival. \*

Claudius  
arrives in  
Britain.

As soon as Claudius received this intelligence, he committed the charge both of the city and army to Vitellius, his colleague in the consulate, and, embarking at Ostia, he sailed to Marseilles. From thence he travelled by land to Boulogne, where he took ship for Britain, and arrived safe in the army there, of which he assumed the command. † One of the ancient historians, from whom our account of these transactions is chiefly taken, relates, "That the Emperor passed the Thames, defeated the Britons, took Camulodunum, the capital of Cunobelinus, and brought many under subjection by force, and others by surrender." ‡ But another tells us, "That he came over into Britain, and part of the island submitted, within a few days after his arrival, without battle or bloodshed." This last

\* Dio. l. 60.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Sueton. in C. Claud. c. 17.

account is confirmed by the inscription quoted below. \* However this may be, Claudius having received the submissions of such princes and states as were either forced or disposed to make them, and appointed Aulus Plautius the first governor of this new province, with orders to prosecute the war, hastened back to Rome, which he entered in triumph, in less than six months after his departure from it.† He appointed Vespasian to be second in command, and to assist Plautius in the government of the province, and the management of the war. In this office that great general acquired much honour, and laid the foundation of his future fame and greatness.‡ At the head of one division of the Roman army he carried on the war against the Belgic Britons, who inhabited the seacoasts from Kent to the Land's-end. Here, in the course of a few years, he had two-and-thirty engagements with the enemy, reduced the Isle of Wight, and subdued the Belgæ and Deuotriges, two of the most powerful nations in these parts. § Plautius, with

A.D. 43.


\* TI. CLAVDIO CÆS.  
AVGVSTO  
PONTIFICI MAX. TR. P. IX.  
COS. V. IMP. XVI. P. P.  
SENATUS POPVL. Q. R. QVOD  
REGES BRITANNIÆ ABSQ;  
VLLA IACTURA DOMVERIT  
GENTESQVE BARBARAS  
PRIMUS INDICIO SVBEGERIT.

See Wright's Travels, p. 293.

† Sueton. in Claud. c. 17.

‡ Tacit. vita Agric. c. 13.

§ Sueton. in Fl. Vespas. c. 4. Eutrop. l. 7. c. 8.

A.D. 43.  the other division of the army, prosecuted the war against the inland Britons, who were still commanded by the brave Caractacus. We are not particularly informed of the exploits of Plautius, but that, in general, he carried on the British war very successfully; and that when he was recalled from his government, he had the honour of an ovation, or lesser triumph, in which the emperor walked on his left hand to the capitol. \*

A.D. 50.  
Ostorius  
governor  
of Britain.

Aulus Plautius being recalled A. D. 47, the direction of affairs in this island seems to have been in the hands of the legates or commanders of the legions to A. D. 50, when Ostorius Scapula, a general of consular quality, was appointed governor of the Roman province in Britain. † It seems probable that the Britons had gained some advantages in this interval; for when Ostorius arrived in Britain, he found all things in great confusion, and the enemy plundering the territories of the Roman allies. These predatory bands acted with greater boldness, because they imagined that a new general would hardly take the field, in the winter season, at the head of troops to which he was a stranger. But in this they found themselves mistaken. For Ostorius being sensible that the activity and intrepidity of a general at his first entering upon his command contributed greatly to

\* Dio. l. 60. Sueton. in Claud. c. 24. Eutrop. l. 7, c. 8.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 13.

raise his reputation, and strike terror into his enemies, led forth his troops immediately against the plunderers, and defeated them with great slaughter. In order to protect the province from future incursions, this prudent general built a chain of forts along the banks of the rivers Nen and Severn; and to preserve it from internal commotions, he commanded all such as he suspected, both subjects and allies, to deliver up their arms. \*

A.D. 50.


This last measure became the occasion of a new war. For the Iceni, † who had very early entered into an alliance with the Romans, and had suffered nothing in all the late wars, chose rather to revolt than to resign their arms; and, being joined by some neighbouring nations, they raised a considerable army, which they encamped in a place defended by a ditch, and inaccessible to cavalry. Ostorius, knowing the great advantage of celerity on such occasions, collected such troops as were nearest, and, commanding his cavalry to dismount and fight on foot, attacked the revolted in their entrenchments. The battle was for some time obstinate and bloody; but the Britons being at length thrown into confusion, were hampered and entangled with their own enclosures, and entirely defeated. This defeat obliged several other nations who were wavering between peace and war,

A.D. 51.  
Ostorius  
subdues  
the Iceni.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 30.

† The Iceni inhabited the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon. See chap. 3. sect. 1.



A.D. 51.  to remain in quiet. To prevent the like insurrections, and keep the surrounding country in awe, Ostorius planted a numerous colony of veterans at Camulodunum, now Malden in Essex: \*

Ostorius  
quiets a  
sedition  
among the  
Brigantes.

After Ostorius had thus restored the tranquillity, and provided for the security of the Roman province in the south-east parts of Britain, he marched his army westward; and having, in his march, defeated a numerous army of Ceangi, † arrived within a little way of the sea which washes the coast of Ireland. But he was soon recalled from thence, by the news of some commotions which had arisen amongst the Brigantes, who had made an alliance with the Romans. ‡ These commotions he suppressed in a little time, and without much difficulty; and, by executing a few of the most active of the insurgents, and pardoning all the rest, he restored the tranquillity of the country. §

War be-  
tween the  
Romans  
and the  
Silures.

It was not long before Ostorius was called to encounter more determined enemies. These were the Silures, || a people naturally brave, and so fond of liberty, that nothing but force could break them to the yoke. At this time they were rendered more confident and bold in themselves, and more formidable to their ene-

\* See chap. 5. sect. 1.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Id. *ibid.* The Brigantes inhabited Yorkshire, &c.

§ Tacit. *Annal.* l. 12. c. 52.

|| See chap. 5. sect. 1. The Silures were the ancient inhabitants of South Wales.

mies, by the experience and valour of their leader, the renowned Caractacus, who having lost the greatest part of his own dominions, willingly put himself at the head of this brave people, to make another effort for the deliverance of his country. This prince had the advantage of the Roman general, in a more perfect knowledge of the scene of action; and he availed himself of this advantage, by transferring the war into the country of the Ordovices,\* and by choosing a place for the field of battle, which was every way favourable to his own army, and incommodious to his enemies. “It was on the ridge of an exceeding steep mountain; and where the sides of it were inclining and accessible, he reared walls of stone for a rampart. At the foot of the mountain flowed a river dangerous to be forded, and a host of men guarded his entrenchments.”† There is a hill in Shropshire, near the confluence of the Coln and Teme, called *Caer-Caradoc*, from *Caradoc*, the British name of *Caractacus*, which exactly answers this description of *Tacitus*, and where the vestiges of all these ramparts and entrenchments are still visible.‡ At this place the armies of the Romans and Britons met. As soon as *Caractacus* beheld the enemy approaching, he drew up his troops in order of battle, and flew through the whole army, crying with a loud and animating voice, “That from this day and

\* See chap. 5. sect. 1. The Ordovices inhabited North Wales.

† *Tacit. Annal.* l. 12, c. 55.

‡ *Camd. Brit.* p. 617.

A.D. 51.

“ this battle, they must date their liberty rescued, or their servitude eternally established. He invoked the shades of their heroic ancestors, who had expelled Cæsar the Dictator ; those brave men, by whose valour they still enjoyed freedom from tribute and Roman taxes, and their wives and children from prostitution.” The chieftains of the several tribes seconded the ardour of their general, and endeavoured to inspire the hearts of their followers with resolution. The whole army, fired by the actions and speeches of their leaders, took a solemn oath, to conquer or to die, and then prepared for the charge, with the most terrible and tremendous shouts. †

Battle between the Romans and the Silures.

The Roman general, observing the deepness of the river, the steepness of the mountain, the strength of the ramparts, and the loud alacrity of the enemy, was a little dismayed at such a succession of dangers. But his officers and soldiers discovering much ardour and impatience to be engaged, he led them to the charge. They passed the river without much difficulty ; but in ascending the hill they sustained great loss from showers of darts. To guard against these, they formed the testudo, or military shell, by holding their shields, joined close together, over their heads, and under this shelter they approached the rampart ; which had appeared more formidable at a distance than it was in

† Tacit. Annal, l. 12. c. 54.

reality. For being made only of loose stones, it was easily demolished, and the Romans breaking in, engaged hand to hand. The Britons, not able to sustain the shock, retired slowly towards the ridge of the mountain, and were closely followed by the Romans. There again the battle was renewed with great fury, but on very unequal terms. For the bows and arrows of the Britons, who had no defensive armour, were not a match in close fight, to the swords and javelins of the legionaries, and the great sabres and pikes of the auxiliaries. The Britons were therefore soon broken, and defeated with great slaughter. The wife and daughter of Caractacus were taken prisoners on the field, and his brothers surrendered soon after the battle. \*

A.D. 51.



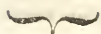
The unhappy Caractacus made his escape from this fatal battle; but it was only to fall into new misfortunes. For, having taken shelter in the court of Cartismandua, Queen of the Brigantes, that unkind stepmother delivered him in chains to the conqueror, and he, with his whole family, were carried prisoners to Rome. This prince had been long renowned over all the British islands, and the neighbouring Continent, for the noble stand which he had made in defence of his country; his fame had reached Italy and Rome itself, and had excited an earnest desire in all to behold the hero who for nine years had defied the Roman arms. The Emperor too, being

A.D. 52.

Caractacus carried prisoner to Rome.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 56.

A.D. 52.



proud of such a prisoner, determined to render his entry into Rome as solemn and public as possible. On the day appointed for that solemnity, the people were summoned to behold him as an object of admiration; the prætorian bands were drawn up under arms, and the Emperor and Empress were seated on two lofty tribunals. The servant and followers of the British king, with the military harness, golden chains, and other spoils, which he had taken from his neighbours in war, appeared first; then followed his brothers, his wife, and his daughter; and Caractacus himself closed the procession. All the other prisoners were dejected by their misfortunes; but Caractacus appeared undaunted and erect, without betraying one suppliant look, or uttering one word that implored mercy. When he came before the imperial throne, he addressed Claudius in the following sensible and noble speech: \*

Caractacus's  
speech to  
Claudius.

“ If my moderation in prosperity, O Claudius! had been as conspicuous as my birth and fortune, I should now have entered this city as a friend, and not as a prisoner; nor would you have disdained the friendship of a prince descended from such illustrious ancestors, and governing so many nations. My present condition, I own, is to you honourable,—to me humiliating. I was lately possessed of subjects, horses, arms, and riches. Can you be surprised that I endeavoured to preserve them?

\* Tacit. *Annal.* l. 12. c. 56.



“ If you Romans have a desire to arrive at universal monarchy, must all nations, to gratify you, tamely submit to servitude? If I had submitted without a struggle, how much would it have diminished the lustre of my fall, and of your victory! And now, if you resolve to put me to death, my story will soon be buried in oblivion; but if you think proper to preserve my life, I shall remain a lasting monument of your clemency.” It is greatly to the honour of Claudius, that he was so much charmed with the boldness of his illustrious prisoner, that he pardoned him and his whole family, and commanded their chains to be immediately taken off. \*

A.D. 52.

The late victory over the Silures, and the captivity of Caractacus, caused no little joy at Rome. The senate being assembled on the occasion, many pompous speeches were pronounced. Some of the senators declared, “ That the taking of Caractacus was an event no less glorious than those of old, when Siphax was by Publius Scipio, Perses by Lucius Paulus, or any other conquered kings were, by any of our greatest captains, presented in chains to the Roman people.” In so important a light did a victory over this brave prince, and his hardy Britons, appear to the conquerors of the world! The senate, as a farther proof of their satisfaction, decreed the triumphal ornaments to Ostorius. †

Rejoicings  
at Rome  
for the  
victory  
over the  
Silures.

\* Tacit. Annal. 1, 12, c. 57.

† Id. ibid. c. 58.

A.D. 52.  
Ostorius  
unfortunate.

Thus far Ostorius had been successful in all his enterprises in Britain; but the concluding period of his command and life was not so prosperous. Though the Silures had sustained a grievous loss in the late battle, yet their spirits were still unbroken, and their hearts more inflamed than ever with resentment, and the desire of revenge. They made a sudden attack upon the camp-marshal and legionary cohorts, who were building forts in their country, killed the marshal himself, eight centurions, and a great number of their bravest men; and would have obtained a more complete victory, if succours had not arrived very opportunely from the neighbouring garrisons. Soon after this, they defeated the Roman foragers, the troops that guarded them, and others which were sent to their relief. This obliged the general to draw out the legions, and march to the assistance of the fugitives; which brought on a general engagement, in which the Britons were at length forced to give way; but they retired, with little loss, under the favour of approaching night. In a word, the Silures being still more exasperated by an angry expression, which it was reported had fallen from Ostorius, “ That their name was to be utterly extinguished, like that of the Sugambrians, who were all “ either killed or transplanted into Gaul; ” they gave him and his army no rest, but harassed him day and night with skirmishes, ambushes, and surprises. In one of these, they carried off two cohorts of auxiliaries, who were plundering the

country; and, by dividing the captives and spoils among the neighbouring nations, were endeavouring to excite a general revolt; when Ostorius died of vexation and a broken heart, to the inexpressible joy of his enemies. \*


A.D. 52.

As soon as the Emperor received the news of the death of his lieutenant in Britain, he immediately appointed Aulus Didius to be his successor; being sensible of the impropriety of leaving that province any long time without a chief governor, in its present unsettled state. But though Didius made all possible haste to come over and take possession of his government, he found things in very great confusion at his arrival. The Silures had defeated the legion commanded by Manlius Valens, and were making incursions on all hands into the territories of the Romans, and of their allies. But Didius soon gave a check to these incursions. The courage and animosity of the Silures rendered them very formidable enemies; but they were now become more formidable, by the accession of a new ally and leader. This was Venusius, chieftain of the Huiccii,† who, after Caractacus, was the most famous of all the British princes of his time for his military talents. He had been a faithful friend and ally of the Romans, but was alienated from them in the following manner. Venusius had married Cartismandua, Queen of

A.D. 53.  
Aulus  
Didius,  
governor  
of Britain,  
continues  
the war  
with the  
Silures.

\* Tacit. Annal, l. 12. c. 38, 39.

† See chap. 5. sect. 1. The Huiccii inhabited Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

A.D. 55.  the Brigantes, who was also an ally of the Romans. This marriage proved very unhappy to the parties themselves, to their country, and to the Romans. All these misfortunes flowed from the criminal levity of the Queen, which excited the jealousy of her husband. These family-dissensions at length broke out into a civil war, which the Romans for some time left them to manage by themselves, without declaring for either party. But Cartismandua having gained some advantages, and got the brother and other kindred of Venusius into her hands, imagined that she was no longer under any necessity of paying any regard to appearances, or the opinion of the world. She publicly espoused Vellocatus, her armour-bearer and gallant, and declared him king. This scandalous action gave great offence to her subjects the Brigantes, who so generally revolted, that the Queen was in great danger of falling into the hands of her enraged husband. In this extremity, she implored the assistance of the Romans, with whom she had much merit, for betraying Caractacus; and they sent some troops to her relief. This naturally provoked Venusius to abandon their interest, and put himself at the head of those Britons, who appeared in defence of their country. Didius, who was now become unwieldy through age, managed this war between the Romans and Cartismandua on one side, and the Britons and Venusius on the other, by his lieutenants. It continued for a considerable time with various success; but

at length Cartismandua found herself obliged to leave her kingdom in the possession of her injured husband. \*

A.D. 55.

While these things were doing in Britain, the Emperor Claudius died, and was succeeded by Nero. During the three first years of his reign, Aulus Didius still continued proprætor in this island; but contented himself with restraining the incursions of the enemy, without attempting to extend his conquests. Nero, who was a most abominable and capricious tyrant, entertained thoughts of withdrawing the Roman forces altogether out of Britain, where they had lately been so much harassed. But he was restrained from executing this design, by the fear of being thought to detract from the glory of his father Claudius, for whose memory he pretended to have a very high regard. †

A.D. 54.  
Nero.

Aulus Didius was succeeded in the government of the Roman province in Britain by Veranius, a man who had been much esteemed for virtue and severity of manners. He performed nothing very memorable in this island; for, after having made a few slight incursions into the territories of the Silures, he was carried off by death, in less than a year after his arrival. It then appeared, from the singular strain of his last-will, that he had not been so free from ambition, vanity, and the love of court-favour, as it had been imagined;

A.D. 57.  
Veranius  
governor  
of Britain.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 40. Idem Hist. l. 5. c. 45.

† Sueton. in Ner. c. 18.



A.D. 57. for in that writing, after he had bestowed many flatteries on the tyrant Nero, he added "That  
 " if his life had been prolonged for two years,  
 " he would have subjected all Britain to his  
 " obedience." \* A vain boast, which there is  
 no probability he could have made good!

A.D. 59.  
 Suetonius  
 Paulinus  
 subdues  
 Anglesey.

Veranius was succeeded by Suetonius Paulinus, one of the most celebrated generals of these times, and the great rival of the renowned Corbulo, in military fame and popularity. He was very desirous of eclipsing the glory which Corbulo had lately gained by his conquests in Armenia, by making greater conquests in Britain.† In the first two years of his government, all his undertakings were crowned with success; he subdued several British tribes, and planted a number of garrisons to keep them in subjection.

A.D. 61. Encouraged by this success, Suetonius, in his third year, engaged in a more important enterprise: This was the conquest of the Isle of Anglesey, at that time a kind of sacred place, the residence of the archdruid, and the asylum of all the enemies of the Roman government. Suetonius, having marched his army to the coast, transported his foot into the island, in flat-bottomed boats provided for that purpose, and his cavalry, partly by fording, and partly by swimming. At his landing, he found the British army drawn up in order of battle, and ready to engage. This army made a very strange ap-

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 29.

† Id. ibid.

pearance : for besides the fighting men, there were many women, clad in funeral apparel, their hair dishevelled, and torches in their hands, running frantically up and down, like furies in their wildest transports. Besides these, there were great multitudes of druids standing round the army, with their hands lifted up to Heaven, and pouring out the most direful imprecations against their enemies. These horrid spectacles at first struck the Roman soldiers with consternation ; and for some time they stood motionless as marks to the wounds of the Britons. But being at length roused from this inglorious terror, by the animating speeches of their general and officers, they advanced to the charge, and soon dispersed the British army. Suetonius made a cruel use of this victory, not only cutting down the sacred groves, and demolishing their altars, but even burning the druids in their own fires \*


A.D. 61.



While Suetonius was thus employed in the isle of Anglesey, a dreadful storm was brewing against him on the Continent of Britain. Many causes concurred to raise this storm, and to render it violent and universal. Those Britons who had been constrained to submit to the Roman power, still retained a fond remembrance of their former freedom, and were very impatient under the yoke, which became every day more heavy and

Revolt of  
the Bri-  
tons.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 30. Vita Agric. c. 14.

A.D. 61.  galling, through the insolence, lust, and avarice of the Roman officers and soldiers. Some of the British states had also received particular affronts and injuries, which blew up their secret discontents into an open flame. The Trinobantes were cruelly oppressed by the veterans settled amongst them in the colony of Camalodunum, who, not contented with turning them out of their houses, and depriving them of their native lands, insulted them with the opprobrious name of slaves. Their neighbours, the Iceni, groaned under pressures and indignities still more intolerable. Prasutagus, the late king of that nation, a prince long renowned for his opulence and grandeur, had, by his last will, left the Emperor his joint heir with his own two daughters, in hopes of procuring his protection to his kingdom and family by so great an obligation. But this measure produced an effect very different from what was expected, and involved his subjects and family in the most deplorable calamities. For he was no sooner dead, than his dominions, his houses, and all his possessions were seized and plundered by the Roman officers and soldiers: his queen, remonstrating against this injustice, was, without regard to her sex or quality, beaten with stripes; her virgin daughters violated; and the other relations of the late king were taken and kept as slaves. Nor were the royal family the only sufferers on this occasion. The whole country was spoiled and plundered,

and all the chiefs of the Iceni were deprived of their possessions. \* So insupportable was the Roman government now become, under a succession of tyrants !

A.D. 61.

The distance of Suetonius and his army gave the wretched Britons an opportunity of consulting together, and inspiring each other with the thoughts of vengeance. “ Our patience (said “ they) serves only to draw upon us greater injuries. Formerly we were subject only to one “ king, now we are enslaved to two tyrants. “ The governor lords it over our persons, the “ procurator over our fortunes. The union and “ discord of these two oppressors are to us equally destructive, the one by his blood-thirsty soldiers, the other by his greedy officers ; and “ every thing falls a prey either to their lust or “ avarice. ”

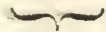
The Britons destroy Camalodunum.

At length the Iceni, having inflamed one another with the most furious resentment, and being joined by the Trinobantes and some others, flew to arms, and poured like an irresistible torrent on the Roman colony at Camalodunum. The veterans of this colony, not apprehending such an assault, were ill provided for resistance. The place was not fortified, the number of men within it capable of bearing arms was but small, and Catus Decianus, procurator of the province, sent no more than two hundred men to their assistance. The enraged Britons broke in at the very

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14, c. 51.



A.D. 61.



first assault, put all to the sword who fell into their hands, and laid every thing in ashes. The soldiers of the garrison retired into the temple of Claudius; a fabric of great beauty and strength, which was also taken by storm, after a siege of two days. \* Thus was the first Roman colony in Britain utterly destroyed, after it had subsisted only a few years, and the whole province was in the greatest danger of being lost.

The ninth  
legion de-  
feated.

When Suetonius set out on his expedition into the isle of Anglesey, he left Petilius Cerialis with the ninth legion, of which he was commander, to defend the province. As this officer was marching with his troops to the relief of Camalodunum, he was met by the victorious Britons in their return from the destruction of that place, and totally defeated. In this action the whole infantry of the ninth legion were cut in pieces, and Cerialis and his cavalry made their escape with great difficulty to their camp. Catus Decianus, the procurator of the province, whose insatiable avarice had been one great cause of the revolt, seeing all things falling into confusion, and justly dreading the most cruel punishments if he fell into the hands of the enemy, made his escape into Gaul. †

Verulamium and London taken by the Britons.

As soon as Suetonius (who was building forts in Anglesey for the security of his conquest) received the news of all these disasters, he left that

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 32. Vita Agric. c. 15.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 52.




island, and, marching his army with great boldness and expedition through some part of the revolted country, arrived safe in London. This city, though not honoured with the title of a colony, was already become large, populous, and wealthy, abounding in all kinds of provisions. At first, Suetonius had some thoughts of staying in this place with his army, and defending it against all the efforts of the enemy. But afterwards, considering that it would be very imprudent to coop himself up in a place so ill fortified, he determined rather to take the field. The inhabitants of London endeavoured, by their tears, their lamentations, and most earnest entreaties, to persuade him to stay for their protection. But he was inflexible, and, resolving rather to hazard the loss of one city, than of the whole province, he marched away with his army, and such of the inhabitants as thought proper to follow him; leaving behind all those who were unable, or unwilling to forsake the place.\*

Soon after Suetonius had left London, it was entered by a great army of Britons under Boadicia, Queen of the Iceni, who put all whom they found in it to the sword. From thence they marched to Verulamium, now St Alban's (which was a free city and a very populous place), where they exercised the same unrelenting cruelties. So violent was the fury of the enraged Britons on this occasion, that they reserved no prisoners

A.D. 61.  


\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 55.

A.D. 61.  either to sell or exchange, but put all to death, by killing, gibbeting, burning, and crucifying, without distinction of age or sex. So great was the carnage, that it is computed no fewer than seventy thousand Romans and their confederates perished at Camalodunum, London, Verulamium, and other places. \*

Great  
army of  
the Bri-  
tons under  
Boadicia.

The British army, having received reinforcements from many different nations, who were encouraged to take up arms by the success of the first insurgents, was now become exceeding numerous, amounting to no fewer than 230,000 men. † This prodigious army, composed of so many fierce and warlike nations, was commanded in chief by the renowned Boadicia, whose injuries had excited, and whose resentments had inflamed this great revolt, and who, by her heroic spirit, was entitled to that distinction. The Britons, flushed with their late successes, and exulting in their numbers, were so confident of victory, that they brought their wives to the field in waggons, to be spectators of the destruction of their enemies. The Roman army was indeed very inconsiderable in point of numbers, consisting only of the fourteenth legion, the vexillation of the twentieth, and some auxiliaries, making about ten thousand men; but in all other respects it was very formidable, being composed of the bravest, best armed, and best

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 33.

† Xiphilin. ex Dione in Neron.

disciplined troops in the world, under the command of a general of great courage and long experience. Suetonius discovered great prudence in the choice of his ground. The rear was secured by an impenetrable wood, and the ground before him stretched out into a hollow and narrow vale, with very steep sides; so that he was accessible only in front. \* Here he drew up his army in order of battle, placing the legionaries in the centre, supported by the light-armed foot, with his cavalry in the two wings; and in this posture waited for the enemy.

A.D. 61.



When the Britons drew near their enemies, and were ready to engage, Boadicia, mounted on a lofty chariot, dressed in royal robes, a spear in her hand, and her two unhappy daughters seated at her feet, drove through the whole army, and, addressing herself to each nation, conjured them to fight bravely, and take vengeance on the Romans, for the loss of their own liberties, the stripes inflicted on her person, and the violated honour of her virgin daughters. She encouraged them to hope that Heaven would espouse their cause against their abandoned enemies; put them in mind of their late victory over the ninth legion; desired them to take courage from their own prodigious strength and numbers, whose very shouts were sufficient to confound so weak an enemy; and concluded with declaring, "That she, though a woman, was fully deter-

Speeches  
of Boadi-  
cia and  
Suetonius.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14, c. 51. Xiphilin, ex Dione in Neron.

A.D. 61. “mined to conquer or to die; the men, if they  
 “pleased, might live, and be slaves.” On the  
 other hand, the Roman general, being sensible  
 that every thing depended on the event of this  
 battle, encouraged his soldiers to despise the  
 clamour and multitude of their enemies, who  
 were ill armed, and worse disciplined, and would  
 betake themselves to flight, as soon as they felt  
 the edge of their swords. He directed them to  
 keep firm in their ranks, and, after they had dis-  
 charged their javelins, to rush upon the enemy  
 sword in hand. \*

Battle be-  
 tween the  
 Romans  
 and Bri-  
 tons.

The signal of battle being given, the Britons  
 advanced to the charge with dreadful shouts,  
 and poured a shower of darts and arrows upon  
 the enemy. The Romans stood firm, sheltering  
 themselves with their shields and the narrowness  
 of the place, until the Britons had exhausted all  
 their darts, and advanced within reach of their  
 javelins, which they discharged with great force.  
 The legion, supported by the auxiliaries, then  
 rushed out upon the Britons with the navels of  
 their shields and swords, and the cavalry with  
 their pikes, with such impetuosity and weight as  
 bore down all resistance. The disorder and con-  
 fusion among the unhappy Britons soon became  
 universal and irrecoverable, and, being entangled  
 in their flight by their own waggons, which they  
 had placed in a line in the rear with their wives,  
 they were slaughtered in great multitudes. Such

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14, c. 55, 56. Xiphilin. ex Dione in Neron,



was the fury of the Roman soldiers, that they killed all who came in their way, men, women, and even beasts, without distinction ; and the carnage was so great, that some authors have affirmed that no fewer than eighty thousand of the Britons were killed in the battle and pursuit. The Romans had about four hundred men killed, and not many more wounded. \* The wretched Boadicia, unable to survive the calamities of that day, put an end to her life and miseries by poison.

A.D. 61.

Suetonius, a little before this battle, had sent orders to Pœnius Posthumus, camp-marshal of the second legion, to join him with the troops under his command. But that officer, afraid perhaps of being intercepted by the Britons on his march, declined obeying these orders, and continued in his camp. When he heard of the glorious victory which Suetonius and his little army had obtained, dreading the punishment of disobedience, and distracted at the thoughts of having deprived himself and his troops of their share of the honour of this victory, he ran himself through with his sword. †

Pœnius Posthumus kills himself.

If Suetonius had been possessed of the happy art of gaining the affections of those by mildness whom he had subdued by force, he would have had the honour of putting a final period to this great revolt, and of reducing a great part of South Britain, under the peaceable obedience of

Suetonius recalled.

\* Tacit, *Annal.* I. 14. c. 57.† Id, *ibid.*



A.D. 61.

the Romans. But that general, being naturally severe, and also greatly irritated by the cruelties which had been perpetrated by the Britons in the beginning of their revolt, pursued that wretched people (who at the same time suffered all the horrors of a cruel famine) with unrelenting rigour. This obliged them, in their own defence, to keep the field, and continue in a hostile posture and disposition. They were encouraged in this disposition, by a misunderstanding which subsisted between the governor and Julius Classicianus, the new procurator, who gave out every where, “that a new governor was to be expected, who being free from the anger of an enemy, and the arrogance of a conqueror, would treat all who submitted with tenderness.” He also wrote to court, “that unless a successor was sent to Suetonius, the war would prove endless.” When Nero received these letters he despatched Polycletus, one of his favourite freedmen, with a pompous retinue into Britain, to examine into the state of affairs, and to endeavour to reconcile the governor and procurator. Polycletus having made a report rather favourable to Suetonius, he was continued in his government. But soon after, upon the slight misfortune of losing a few gallies, he was finally recalled, about the end of this very busy year, or the beginning of the next. \*

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 55. 59.

The brave and active Suetonius was succeeded in the government of the Roman province, and the command of the Roman army in Britain, by Petronius Turpilianus, who had been consul the preceding year. Under this governor, the war between the Romans and Britons seems to have languished and died away, by a mutual abstinence from hostilities, rather than to have been terminated by any formal peace. By this inaction of Turpilianus, which the great historian of these times terms inglorious, Britain happily enjoyed a profound tranquillity during his administration, which continued about three years. \*

A.D. 62.

Turpilianus  
governor of  
Britain.

Turpilianus was succeeded by Trebellius Maximus, who was still more indolent and unwarlike than his predecessor. This governor endeavoured to preserve the peace of his province by treating the native Britons with the greatest mildness and indulgence, with which they were so well pleased, that they gave him no disturbance. But he found it not so easy to govern his own army. The legions which served in Britain had long been famous for their modest and orderly behaviour. This was partly owing to their situation in an island at a distance from the ca- bals of the other legions, and partly to their being kept constantly employed. † But the late inaction of these legions had produced a very fatal change in their disposition and manners,

A.D. 65.

Trebellius  
Maximus.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 55, 59. Vita Agric. c. 16.

† Tacit. Hist. l. 1. c. 9.

A.D. 65. and they were now become unruly and mutinous. This disposition was much inflamed by Roscius Cælius, commander of the twentieth legion, who had long hated the governor, and charged him with defrauding and plundering the army. The disaffection of the soldiers at length became so violent, that Trebellius abandoned the island, and fled to Vitellius, who had lately been declared Emperor. After the departure of Trebellius, Britain was for some time governed by the commanders of the legions, amongst whom Cælius, by his superior boldness, bore the chief sway. \*

A.D. 69.  
Vectius  
Bolanus.

Vitellius sent Vectius Bolanus into Britain to succeed Trebellius, who had returned and resumed his command there for a little time, but without suitable authority. Bolanus was no less indolent, but more innocent than his predecessor; and though he could not command the respect of the soldiers by his spirit, he gained their affections by his lenity. When Vespasian was declared emperor by his army, Vitellius sent to Bolanus for succours out of Britain; but that general, who was really wavering between the two competitors, excused himself, by alleging the unsettled state of his province. Bolanus was recalled from the government of Britain soon after the death of Vitellius, and the accession of Vespasian. †

\* Tacit. Hist. l. 1. c. 60.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 16. Hist. l. 2. c. 97.

As soon as Vespasian was peaceably seated in the imperial throne, the government of the empire became every where more vigorous, particularly in Britain, where brave and active generals were employed. Petilius Cerialis was the first Roman governor of Britain, in the reign of this emperor, who, immediately after his arrival, made war upon the Brigantes, the most numerous and powerful nation of the ancient Britons.\* In this war, which was long and bloody, Cerialis was greatly assisted by the renowned Agricola, who at that time commanded the twentieth legion, whose conduct and courage in the execution of the most dangerous enterprises, could only be equalled by his modesty, in ascribing the honour of them to his general. The Brigantes, animated and conducted by their warlike king Venusius, made a brave defence, and several battles were fought, of which some were very bloody; but before Cerialis was recalled, he had quite reduced the greatest part of their country, and ravaged the rest.†

Petilius Cerialis was succeeded in the government of Britain by Julius Frontinus, who was in no respect inferior to his predecessor, and met with enemies no less formidable than the Brigantes. These were the Silures, who, of all the British nations, made the longest and most obstinate defence against the Romans. But this

A.D. 70.



 Petilius  
Cerialis.

A.D. 75.

 Julius  
Frontinus.

\* See chap. 3. sect. 1. ¶ 21.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 8. c. 17.

A.D. 75.  brave people, notwithstanding all their valour, their ardent love of liberty, and the difficult situation of their country, were now at last constrained to yield to the superior power and fortune of Rome. \*

A.D. 78.  
Julius  
Agricola  
governor  
of Britain.

Frontinus was succeeded by Cnæus Julius Agricola, the greatest, best, and most famous of all the Roman governors of Britain; and peculiarly happy in this, that his exploits in this island have been recorded at full length, and set in the fairest light, by one of the most eloquent historians of antiquity. † Agricola entered upon his government with great advantages and expectations, being then in the prime of life, adorned with the highest honours of the state, learned, eloquent, brave, and virtuous, equally admired and beloved by the army which he was to command, and well acquainted with the country which he was to govern. For he had learnt the first rudiments of war in the Roman army in Britain, under the brave Suetonius in the time of the great revolt, and served several years afterwards in the same army with great honour, as commander of the twentieth legion. He improved all these advantages to the utmost, and exceeded the highest expectations which had been formed of him.

Agricola's  
first cam-  
paign.

The summer was far advanced when Agricola arrived in Britain, and the army was already separated and gone into quarters, expecting no

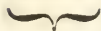
\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 8. c. 17.

† Tacitus.



further action that campaign. But being sensible A.D. 78.  
that the success of a general depends very much }  
on the boldness of his first measures, he determined immediately to take the field, in order to chastise the Ordovici, who had cut in pieces almost a whole wing of horse quartered on their confines; and to give an early check to a general spirit of disaffection which prevailed in several British states. Having therefore drawn together a choice body of legionaries, with a few auxiliaries, he marched into the country of the Ordovici, and took a very severe vengeance upon them, that he might thereby deter others from the like attempts. Not even content with this, he resolved to finish and secure the conquest of the isle of Anglesey, which Suetonius had been obliged to leave imperfect. The chief difficulty of this enterprise lay in transporting his men into the island without ships, which he had not leisure to provide. But his resolution and capacity surmounted this difficulty. He selected from amongst the auxiliaries a choice body of excellent swimmers, and commanded them to pass the narrowest part of the channel with their horses and arms, but without any baggage. The Britons, astonished at the suddenness and boldness of the attack, surrendered themselves and their island without resistance. These two exploits, executed with so much facility and expedition, at a season which other governors had been accustomed to spend in idle parade and

A.D. 78.



Civil ad-  
ministra-  
tion of  
Agricola  
during the  
winter.

ceremony, excited the admiration of both Romans and Britons. \*

If the conduct of Agricola in this first campaign had got him the reputation of a great commander, his behaviour during the succeeding winter gained him the still more aimable character of a gracious, wise, and equitable magistrate ; who was determined to redress all grievances, and to do impartial justice to all under his government. He introduced a thorough reformation into his own household, suffering none of his domestics to be guilty of the least oppression. In bestowing employments in the state, and preferments in the army, he regarded only merit, known to himself, esteeming it better to employ such as would not transgress, than to punish them for transgressing. The complaints of the provincials he heard with the greatest patience, and redressed with the greatest readiness. He delivered them from the extortions of publicans and the oppressions of monopolists ; and, though he did not remit their tribute, he made the payment of it as easy and commodious as possible. In a word, by his wise and mild administration, the Britons began to be reconciled to the Roman government, and to relish the sweets of peace, which before had been as unsafe and oppressive as even war itself. †

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 18.

† Id. ibid. c. 19.

As soon as the season for action returned, Agricola drew his army together and took the field, directing his march northward, into those parts of the island which had not yet submitted to the Roman arms. As the country was unknown to the Romans, and much of it covered with woods, he was at great pains to guard against surprises, commending such of the soldiers as kept their ranks, and checking such as straggled. He did not trust the choice of the ground for encamping to any of his officers, but pitched upon it himself, and was always amongst the foremost in exploring the rivers, marshes, and woods through which he was to march. To such of the natives as made resistance he gave no rest, distressing them with incessant incursions and ravages; but to those who yielded, he showed the greatest kindness and humanity. In this manner, partly by the terror of his arms, and partly by the fame of his clemency, he brought several British nations to submit to the authority of the Romans in the course of this campaign. These nations are not named by Tacitus; but they were most probably the remainder of the Brigantes, who had not been subdued by Cerialis, the Otodini, the Gadeni, and perhaps the Selgovæ.\* To secure these conquests, he built a considerable number of fortresses in very well chosen situations, from sea to sea (as it is thought), in

A.D. 79.  
Agricola's  
second  
campaign.

\* See chap. 5. sect. 1. ¶ 22, &c. &c.

A.D. 79. or near that tract where Hadrian's rampart and Severus's wall were afterwards erected.\*

Agricola's  
second  
winter.

Agricola spent the succeeding winter in still further civilizing the Britons, and teaching them the most necessary and useful arts. In order to this, he persuaded them to live in a more social and comfortable manner, to build commodious and contiguous houses, and to adorn their towns with halls and temples. On such as yielded to these persuasions, and were active in these useful and ornamental works, he bestowed the highest commendations; thereby raising amongst them a noble spirit of emulation. He was at great pains to have the sons of the British chieftains instructed in the language, learning, and eloquence of the Romans; for which, he said, they had a genius superior to the youth of Gaul. By these and the like means, this great man made an amazing change in the face of the country, and the manners of its inhabitants, in a very little time.† But unhappily, together with a taste for the Roman arts, the British youth contracted also a relish for the Roman luxuries and vices.

A.D. 80.  
Agricola's  
third cam-  
paign.

In his third campaign, Agricola led his army still further north, and entered Caledonia, a country hitherto unknown to the Romans. Marching from south-west towards the north-

\* See Append. No. 9. Tacit. vita Agric. c. 20.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 21.

east, he traversed the territories of several British tribes, and penetrated to the river Tay, without meeting with any enemy in the field. This was not owing to the cowardice of these Caledonians, nor to their willingness to submit to the Roman yoke, but to their policy; hoping to recover without difficulty in the winter, after the retreat of their enemies, what they had lost in the summer. But in these hopes they were disappointed by the wisdom of Agricola, who spent the remainder of this season in building forts in the most convenient situations for keeping possession of the country. As soon as these forts were finished and stored with provisions, he put his army into them for their winter-quarters, that his troops might be every where at hand to check the attempts of the natives to shake off the yoke. Many such attempts they made, but to no purpose. For these fortresses were so well situated, constructed, and defended, that not so much as one of them was either taken by force, or abandoned in despair.\* We are not directly informed by his historian, whether Agricola spent this winter in Caledonia, or in the more southern parts of Britain. But wherever he resided, it was no doubt employed, like his former winters, in the beneficent works of peace.

The fourth campaign of Agricola was also bloodless; and he spent this whole year in securing the extensive conquests which he had al-

A.D. 80.

A.D. 81.  
Agricola's  
fourth  
campaign.

\* Tacit. vita. Agric. c. 22.



A.D. 81. ready made. In order to this, he built a line of forts quite cross the narrow neck of land which separates the firths of Forth and Clyde, exactly in the tract where the rampart of Antoninus Pius was afterwards erected. \* Nature seems to have pointed out this place as the most proper boundary to the Roman empire in Britain. For by this chain of forts, all to the southward was secured to the Romans, and the unconquered Britons were removed, as it were, into another island. †

A.D. 82.  
Agricola's  
fifth cam-  
paign.

But Agricola did not here set bounds to his own ambition and curiosity. For, in his fifth year, he transported his army over the firth of Clyde, into the north-west parts of Caledonia, himself leading the van, and being in the first ship that landed. Here he discovered, and had some successful skirmishes with several British tribes, hitherto quite unknown to the Romans. These were probably the Epedii, Cerones, and Carnonacæ, the original inhabitants of Cantyre, Argyleshire, Lorn, and Lochaber. ‡ From these coasts he had a distinct view of Ireland, and began to entertain thoughts of making a descent upon that island, at a convenient opportunity. He was encouraged in this design by an Irish chieftain, at that time a refugee in his army; who gave him a very inviting description of the country, and assured him that it might

\* See Append. No. 9.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 25.

‡ Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 566, 567, 569.

be conquered and kept by a single legion and a few auxiliaries. With a view to facilitate this enterprise at a proper season, he left some forces in these parts; and having reconducted the rest of his army to the south side of the firth of Clyde, he put them into winter-quarters, in the several forts which he had built in the two preceding years. \*

A.D. 82.

In his sixth year, Agricola turned his eyes towards the north-east parts of Britain, which lay beyond the firth of Forth; and having passed that river, perhaps somewhere near Stirling, he marched along the north banks of it, and the coast of Fife. In this march he was attended by his fleet, which, having sailed early in the spring from Rutupæ (Richborough near Sandwich), attended the army in all its motions, and supported it in all its operations. The fleet kept so near the shore, that the marines frequently landed and encamped with the land forces; each of these corps entertaining the other with surprising tales of the wonders which they had seen, and the exploits which they had performed in these unknown seas and regions. The sight of the fleet was very alarming to the Caledonians; as they now found that the encircling ocean would be no longer any security to them against these bold invaders. They were not however dismayed; but being very numerous, they determined to take up arms, and to defend their country to the

A.D. 83.  
Agricola's  
sixth campaign.

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 21.

A.D. 83. last extremity. In consequence of this resolution, they advanced with great boldness, attacked the Roman forts and parties, and spread a general consternation through the whole army. Some of his officers endeavoured to persuade Agricola to retire with his army to the south side of the firth of Forth, to prevent the disgrace of being defeated and driven back by force. But that brave general, not so easily intimidated, determined to persevere in his enterprise; and, having received intelligence that the enemy, confiding in their superior numbers, and knowledge of the country, designed to assault him on all sides, and in distinct bands; to prevent his being surrounded, he divided his army into three separate bodies. As soon as the Caledonians were informed of this, they suddenly united their whole forces, resolving to fall upon each of these bodies one after another. The ninth legion formed one of these divisions. This legion, which had lost all its infantry in the great revolt under Boadicia, had been recruited with two thousand legionary soldiers, and eight cohorts of auxiliaries.\* But it was still by far the weakest in the Roman army; and therefore they begun the execution of their design by attacking the camp of this legion. This attack, which was in the night-time, and wholly unexpected, had like to have been crowned with success. The centinels and guards were killed,

\* See Append. No. 8.

part of the enemy had entered the camp, where all was in confusion, and the whole legion in the greatest danger of being cut in pieces. But they were rescued from destruction by their brave and vigilant general, who, having received intelligence from his spies, of the enemy's march, pursued their track, and fell upon their rear with his light-armed foot and cavalry. The battle now raged with redoubled fury, and the Caledonians were so hard pressed both in front and rear, that they were obliged to retire with precipitation into the neighbouring woods and marshes, whose vicinity preserved them from a total rout. \*

A.D. 83.

This success revived the spirits of the Roman soldiers; and even those among them who had been most diffident and cautious, became eager for the prosecution of the war. "No country," cried they, "can resist the valour of the Romans. Let us penetrate into the deepest recesses of Caledonia, and, by a succession of victories, push our conquests to the utmost bounds of Britain." On the other hand, the Caledonians were rather irritated than dispirited by their late miscarriage, which they ascribed, not to the superior bravery of their enemies, but to some accidents, and the prodigious address and vigilance of the Roman general. In a word, both sides retired into quarters full of animosity, and spent the winter in preparing for a

The Caledonians make preparations in the winter.

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 25, 26.

A.D. 83. more vigorous and bloody campaign than the former. \*

A.D. 84.  
Agricola's  
seventh  
campaign.

Agricola began his seventh and last campaign in Britain, by sending his fleet to make descents on different parts of the coast of Caledonia; thereby to spread a general alarm, and distract the attention of the enemy. Soon after he drew his army together, and having reinforced it with some bodies of provincial Britons, on whose long-tryed fidelity he could rely, he took the field, and directed his march northward. When he arrived at the Grampain hills, he there found the enemy encamped, and ready to dispute his farther progress.

Prepara-  
tions of the  
Caledo-  
nians.

The Caledonians were at great pains, during the winter, to prepare for this campaign, that they might make one great effort for the preservation of their country. With this view, they held a general assembly of their several states, in which they entered into a strict alliance against the common enemy, and confirmed it by solemn sacrifices: they enlisted and trained all their young men who were capable of bearing arms; and even many of their aged warriors, who had laid aside their swords, resumed them on this great occasion. That they might act with all their united force, they chose Galgacus, one of the greatest and bravest of their chieftains, to command all the troops of the confederacy. At the approach of summer, they removed their

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 27.



wives and children from the open country into woods and fastnesses; and, having collected the troops of their several communities, formed an army of about 30,000 men, with which they encamped on the skirts of the Grampian hills; most probably at a place which is now called Fortingall, about sixteen miles from Dunkeld. \*

A.D. 84.

No sooner did the Roman army approach the Caledonians, than Galgacus drew up his troops in order of battle; and, riding in his chariot along the ranks, he endeavoured to rouse and inflame their courage by animating speeches. He put them in mind, that they were not now to fight only for fame or victory, but for their lives and liberties, their parents, wives and children, and every thing that was dear. He painted the horrors of slavery, the tyranny, cruelty, and oppression of the Romans, in the most frightful colours; and assured them that there was no way of escaping all these dreadful evils but by victory; that flight was now become as unsafe as it was dishonourable; their enemies having penetrated into the heart of their country, and even covered their seas with their fleets. He concluded by calling upon them to look back upon their ancestors, who had long maintained the character of the bravest of all the Britons; and forward to their posterity, whose freedom and happiness depended on their valour, and the event of that

Speech of  
Galgacus.

\* Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 44. Tacit. vita Agric. c. 29.

A.D. 84.



day. These speeches were answered by his troops with military songs, with loud affrighting shouts, and all possible expressions of alacrity and ardour for the fight. \*

Agricola  
draws up  
his army  
in order  
of battle.

Agricola being abundantly sensible of the great importance of the approaching battle, exerted his utmost skill and attention in drawing up his army. He placed a strong body of eight thousand auxiliary foot in the centre, and three thousand horse on the two wings; extending his line to the same length with that of the enemy, to prevent his being flanked; and formed the legions into a second line in the rear, a little without the camp. He made choice of this uncommon disposition, in hopes of gaining the victory by the auxiliaries alone (who were best suited to encounter such an enemy), without the effusion of Roman blood: or that, if the auxiliaries were defeated, the legions might then advance to the charge fresh and entire. Though he observed with pleasure an extraordinary eagerness in his troops for the engagement, yet he thought proper still further to inflame them by a spirited and eloquent harangue, after which he commanded the signal of battle to be given. †

Battle be-  
tween the  
Romans  
and Calce-  
donians.

As long as the two armies fought at a little distance, and by their missive weapons, the Caledonians had the advantage. For, dexterously warding off the darts of their enemies with their

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 50, 51, 52, 55.

† Id. ibid. c. 55, 54, 55.


little targets, they poured in upon them a shower of their own. Agricola observing this, commanded three cohorts of Batavians,\* and two of Tungrians,† to advance and engage the enemy hand to hand; a way of fighting to which these troops had been long accustomed. It now appeared that the long, broad, unwieldy swords of the Caledonians were very unfit for a close engagement; and they were forced to give way, rather to the superior arms than to the superior strength and valour of their enemies. The other auxiliaries, seeing the success of the Tungrians and Batavians, imitated their example, and pressed the Britons so hard with the spikes of their bucklers, and their sharp-pointed swords, that they threw them into confusion. This confusion was very much increased by their own war-chariots. For the horses taking fright, scoured through the field, and overturned every thing that came in their way. A great body of Caledonians, who had been stationed near the summit of the hill, perceiving all these misfortunes, resolved to make an attempt to retrieve the fortune of the day, and turn the scale of victory, by taking a compass, and falling upon the rear of the enemy, as they were engaged in the pursuit. But as they softly descended the hill, they were discovered, attacked, and defeated by four wings of horse, which Agricola kept a-

A.D. 84.

\* The ancient inhabitants of Holland.

† The ancient inhabitants of the countries of Liege, Cologne, &amp;c.

A.D. 84.


 bout his own person to answer such emergencies. After this the Caledonians made no regular resistance, but fled in straggling parties towards the neighbouring woods, where they once more faced about, and gave a severe check to the most forward of their pursuers. The loss of the Romans by their too great eagerness would have been considerable, if their general had not come up and rallied them; commanding them to continue the pursuit in strong and regular bodies. Upon this the Caledonians disbanded, and fled a thousand different ways; everyone shifting for himself, without any regard to his companions. In this fatal battle and pursuit, no fewer than ten thousand of the wretched Britons are said to have been slain, while the Romans lost only three hundred and forty men, and, amongst those, only one officer of note, Aulus Atticus, commander of a cohort. \*

Agricola  
 conducts  
 his army  
 into quar-  
 ters.

The rage and despair of the Caledonians after their defeat were inexpressible. They set fire to their own houses, and some of them even slew their wives and children, to prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, and being made slaves, which they esteemed more deplorable than death. On the day after the battle a profound and mournful silence reigned over the whole country, and nothing was to be seen but clouds of smoke ascending from the burning houses. The scouts reported that they could not meet with one of the inhabitants, nor discover any

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 56, 57.

traces of the enemy, who were entirely dispersed and fled to a great distance. Agricola, considering that the season was too far advanced to push his conquests any further northward, marched his army into the country of the Horesti (now called Angus), from whom he received hostages. Here he gave orders to his fleet to sail northward, and, turning that point, to proceed to their winter station by the western coast. These orders were happily executed, and the fleet arrived safe at the same harbour from whence they had sailed eastward in the spring, having coasted quite around Britain, and discovered from their own experience that it was an island. His land forces he conducted by slow and easy marches, through the lately conquered countries, in order to strike further terror into the minds of the inhabitants, and then put them into their winter-quarters. \*

A.D. 84.

In the beginning of this year, Agricola sent a plain and modest account of these transactions in Britain to the Emperor Domitian; which that jealous and artful tyrant perused with much seeming satisfaction in his countenance, and much real rancour in his heart. For, being destitute of all virtue himself, he was an inveterate enemy to all who excelled in any virtue. On this occasion, however, he thought fit to conceal his malevolent purposes under an appearance of kindness. He caused the senate to decree triumphal ornaments to Agricola, a statue crowned with

A.D. 85.  
Agricola  
recalled.

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 58.



A.D. 85. laurel, and every thing that could be given instead of a real triumph; and he accompanied all these favours with many gracious expressions of esteem and honour. He carried this dissimulation so far, as to encourage a report that he designed to bestow upon him the government of Syria, which was then vacant. But this was only intended to palliate the disgrace of removing him from the government of Britain, from whence he was accordingly recalled in the course of this year. \*

A.D. 86.  
Lucullus  
governor  
of Britain.

The renowned Agricola was succeeded in the government of Britain by Sallustius Lucullus, to whom he left that province very much enlarged, and in a state of profound tranquillity. Lucullus did not long enjoy his authority, but was at once deprived of that and of his life, by the wanton cruelty of Domitian. That vain capricious tyrant, though he was at no pains to deserve fame, was desirous of engrossing it entirely to himself; and mortally hated every person who seemed to aspire to any kind of eminence or renown. Lucullus had invented a lance or spear of a new form, which he permitted to be called the Lucullean Lance; and for this very pardonable piece of vanity Domitian commanded him to be put to death. †

Chasm in  
the history  
of Britain.

From this period to the reign of Hadrian, for about thirty years, under the Emperors Nerva

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 59, 40.

† Sueton. in Domit. c. 10.

and Trajan, the Roman historians give no particular account of the affairs of Britain; nor do they so much as name one of the governors of this province under these two Emperors. The silence of these writers does not seem to have been owing to a total want of materials, or to the perfect tranquillity of this island during that period. For one of them informs us in general, that the Britons, at this time, bore the yoke with impatience, and could hardly be kept in subjection.\* It seems also probable, that some considerable works of peace were executed here in this interval; particularly that some of the famous military ways, whose vestiges are still visible in many parts of Britain, were either constructed or very much improved in the reign of Trajan, who is greatly celebrated for works of that kind.

A.D. 86.

Julius Severus was governor of Britain in the former part of the reign of Hadrian, by whom he was afterwards recalled from hence, and sent to command the army against the Jews, who had revolted.† Severus seems to have been succeeded in the government of this province by Priscus Licinius, who had also been employed in the Jewish war.‡ These are the only two governors of Britain of whom we can discover any traces in the reign of this Emperor; nor do we know any particulars of their transactions.

A.D. 117.  
Julius Severus and  
Priscus  
Licinius.

\* Script. Hist. Aug. vita Hadrian. p. 22.

† Xiphilin. l. 69. p. 795.

‡ Cand. Brit. Introd. p. 81.

A.D. 121.

Emperor  
Hadrian  
arrives in  
Britain.

Hadrian was certainly one of the wisest, most active and accomplished princes that ever filled the imperial throne of Rome. He visited in person all the provinces of his prodigious empire, examining into the civil and military affairs of each of them, with a minuteness which is hardly credible. When this illustrious inspector arrived in Britain, he corrected many things which he found out of order. One great object which Hadrian had in view in visiting the several provinces of his empire, was to fortify and secure their frontiers against the incursions of enemies. Where the natural bulwarks of mountains, seas, and rivers, were wanting, he substituted ditches, walls, and ramparts. Such a rampart or wall of earth he raised in Britain, as the boundary of the Roman province, from the mouth of the river Tine on the east, to the Solway firth on the west, near the track where Agricola had built his first chain of forts.\* Some imagine that all the country to the north of this rampart had been recovered from the Romans by the native Britons after the departure of Agricola; while others think it was now voluntarily slighted by Hadrian. But which of these conjectures is most agreeable to truth, it is impossible to determine.† When this mighty monarch resided in Britain, superintending these works, and regulating the affairs of this province, he carried on a friendly and

\* See Appendix, No. 9.

† Eutrop. l. 8. c. 7. Niphilin. l. 69. p. 792. Script. Hist. August. vita Hadrian. p. 51. 57.

familiar correspondence by letters in verse, with a poet at Rome, named Florus : of which the reader will find a short specimen below ; which is at the same time intended as an evidence of the condescension, wit, and good-humour of this great prince. \* How long Adrian continued in Britain, we are nowhere expressly told ; but only that his departure was hastened by the news of a sedition which had arisen at Alexandria. †

A.D. 121.

Lollius Urbicus was governor of Britain in the reign of Antoninus Pius, the adopted son and successor of Hadrian. Though this excellent emperor was more studious of preserving than enlarging the empire, and ruled with great mildness, there were some commotions in Britain in his time ; and he found it necessary to enlarge the limits of the Roman province in this island, in order to secure its peace. This he accomplished by his lieutenant Lollius Urbicus, who defeated the Mæatae in several engagements, and recovered the country as far as the isthmus between the firths of Forth and Clyde. In order to secure his conquest, and to keep the Cale-

A.D. 138.  
Lollius  
Urbicus.

\* Florus to the Emperor Hadrian.


Ego nolo Cæsar esse,  
Ambulare per Britannos.  
Scythicas pati pruinas.

The Emperor's answer to the poet Florus.

Ego nolo Florus esse,  
Ambulare per tabernas,  
Latitare per popinas,  
Culices pati rotundos.

Script. Hist. August. vita Hadrian. p. 73, 74.

† Id. *ibid.* p. 54.

A.D. 138.  donians at a greater distance, Urbicus, by direction of the Emperor, raised another strong rampart, in imitation of that of Hadrian, between these two firths, along the line of forts which had been formerly built there by Agricola. This rampart, with its ditch and forts, was intended for the outmost boundary of the Roman empire in Britain.\* The famous passage of Pausanias, which hath been the subject of much debate amongst our antiquaries and historians, very probably refers to the transaction which is above related. “The Emperor (says that author) deprived the Brigantes in Britain of much of their lands, because they began to make incursions into Genounia, a region subject to the Romans.”† The plain meaning of which seems to be, that the Mæataæ, who were of the same race, and were often called by the same name with the Brigantes, assisted by some of their countrymen within the wall of Hadrian, made incursions into Genounia or North Wales; for which insult the Romans made war upon them; and, having defeated them in several engagements, deprived them of the sovereignty of all the country between the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

A.D. 161.  
Calpurnius Agri-  
cola.

Antoninus Pius was succeeded in the imperial throne by his adopted son M. Aurelius Antoninus, the philosopher, a prince of great wisdom

\* Eutrop. l. 8. c. 8. Script. Hist. August. vita Ant. Pii, p. 152.  
Append. No. 9.

† Pausan. Arcad. p. 273.



and virtue. The Roman empire, which had enjoyed great tranquillity in the latter part of the preceding reign, in the beginning of this, began to be threatened with disturbances in many of its provinces. Amongst others, the Britons, most probably the Mæataë, who had lately been subjected anew to the Roman power, discovered a strong tendency to revolt. To prevent or to suppress this, Calpurnius Agricola was sent into Britain in quality of lieutenant or governor; and he seems to have succeeded without much difficulty, as we hear no more of these commotions.\*

A.D. 161.

The imperial throne of Rome, which, for more than eighty years, had been filled by great and good princes, was now again dishonoured by a vain, lewd, and cruel tyrant. This was Commodus, the degenerate and unworthy son of Aurelius Antoninus, the philosopher. The loose, disorderly, and oppressive government of this prince gave occasion to many wars, none of which was more dangerous than that of Britain. The Caledonians, having broke through the wall of Antoninus, and being joined by the Mæataë, invaded the Roman province. To repel this invasion, the government of Britain was bestowed upon Ulpius Marcellus, a man of a very different character from those commonly employed by this emperor; perhaps because those profligate wretches who used to purchase provinces with no

A.D. 186.  
Marcellus, and  
Pertinax,  
and Albinus, suc-  
cessively  
governors  
of Britain.

\* Script. Hist. Aug. vita Antonin. Philos. p. 169.

A.D. 180. otherwise but to plunder them, declined a station so full of danger and difficulty. Marcellus was brave, abstemious, and indefatigable; and having first restored the discipline of the Roman troops, he led them against the enemy, and defeated them in several battles.\* But this success, which was so salutary to the Roman province, had like to have been fatal to Marcellus, by exciting the jealousy of his unworthy master; and he thought himself happy that he escaped with the loss of his government.† The immediate successors of Marcellus are not named; but they were so unworthy of their station, and so disagreeable to the army, that they were much enraged against Perennius, who had the chief direction of military affairs; and sent a deputation of fifteen hundred of their number to Rome, to complain of him to the Emperor, for giving them such contemptible commanders. Perennius was put into their hands; and they showed him no mercy, but first scourged, and then beheaded him. To extinguish that spirit of mutiny which still reigned in the army, even after this sacrifice, Pertinax was sent over to command in Britain. That excellent person, who was afterwards emperor, found great difficulty in the execution of this commission, and was often in great danger of losing his life, in suppressing the tumults of the soldiers. At length however he

\* Xiphilin. ex Dione, in Commed.

† Id. ibid. Script. Hist. Aug. vita Commod. p. 275.

succeeded; and having brought the army into tolerable order and discipline, he was recalled, at his own earnest request.\* Pertinax was probably succeeded in the government of Britain by Clodius Albinus, who, it is certain, commanded in this island in the latter part of the reign of Commodus, and during the short reigns of his two successors. Commodus was indeed so much offended with Albinus, for a speech which he made to the army in Britain, on receiving a premature report of that emperor's death, that he appointed Junius Severus to succeed him.† But Commodus was actually slain so soon after, that Junius never got possession of his government.

A.D. 180.



Pertinax, who had a few years before commanded in Britain, succeeded Commodus; but was allowed to reign only three months and three days, being then murdered by the Prætorian soldiers, whose licentiousness he designed to reform. He was a prince worthy of a better fate and better times. The imperial diadem was now exposed to sale by the murderers of the last possessor, and was purchased by one Didius Julianus, who wore it without dignity only two months and ten days, being then put to death by the same Prætorian troops. These two short tumultuary reigns afford no materials for the history of Britain.‡ All things were kept in

A. D. 193.  
Pertinax  
and Julia-  
nus em-  
perors.

\* Script. Hist. Aug. vita. Commod. p. 301.

† Id. ibid. p. 402, 403.

‡ Xiphilin. ex Dione, in Pertinax. Script. Hist. Aug. vita Pert. p. 503.

A.D. 195. profound tranquillity in this island, by Clodius Albinus, who, seeing himself at the head of a great province and gallant army, by whom he was much beloved, began to entertain more ambitious views, which he afterwards discovered.

A.D. 194.  
Albinus  
assumes  
the purple  
in Britain.

Septimius Severus being declared emperor by the armies in Spain and Germany, and Pescennius Niger by those in the East, prepared to dispute the prize. Severus, who was the best politician, as well as the greatest general, dreading a second competitor in Albinus governor of Britain, declared him Cæsar, and flattered him with the hopes of a higher title, in order to keep him quiet, till he had finished the dispute with Niger. This policy had the desired effect. Albinus remained quiet till some time after the death of Niger, when, finding himself disappointed in his hopes of being admitted a partner in the empire, he assumed the purple in Britain, and, having strengthened his army with the flower of the British youth, transported them to the Continent to dispute the empire of the world with Severus. At length, these two competitors met, February

A.D. 197. 19th this year, in a plain near Lyons, where a bloody and decisive battle was fought, in which, Albinus being defeated, killed himself, and left Severus sole master of the Roman empire. \*

A.D. 198.  
Virus Lu-  
pus.

During these transactions on the Continent, this island became a scene of great confusion. The Mæatae and Caledonians, observing the defence-

\* Herodian. l. 5. c. 20, 21, 22, Aurel. Victor. in Septim.

less state of the Roman province, made incursions into it, and spread desolation wherever they came. A.D. 193.

As soon as Severus received the news of this, he sent Virius Lupus with a body of troops to take possession of Britain, and repel these invaders of the province. Lupus, not finding himself able to accomplish this by force, prevailed upon the plunderers to retire, by purchasing their prisoners from them with a sum of money.\* This was not the way to put an end to their incursions. They were renewed with great violence, from time to time, for several years: till the governor of Britain (probably Lupus) wrote to the emperor, entreating him either to send over a much larger body of troops, or to come over in person to quell these disturbances, and restore the tranquillity of the province. †


Though the Emperor Severus was old and very infirm when he received these letters, he immediately resolved upon an expedition in person into Britain. To this he was prompted by his love of military glory, and his desire of keeping his soldiers in action, and of rescuing his two sons from the pleasures and debaucheries of Rome, in which they were deeply plunged. Having settled his affairs on the Continent, he left the city, and, pursuing his journey with great eagerness, arrived in Britain, accompanied by his sons Caracalla and Geta. The news of his arrival, and of his mighty preparations of all kinds for an invasion

A.D. 207.  
The emperor Severus arrives in Britain.

\* Xiphilin. ex Dione, in Sever.

† Herodian. l. 5. c. 46.



A.D. 207.  of their country, greatly alarmed the Mæatae and Caledonians, and induced them to send ambassadors to promise submission, and to sue for peace. But Severus, unwilling to lose the fruit of the toils and expenses which he had been at, and the glory which he expected to gain in the war, dismissed the ambassadors without any satisfactory answer; and soon after begun his march northward, at the head of a very great army. He left his youngest son Geta behind him to govern the Roman province in South-Britain, with a council to assist him, and carried the eldest along with him into the north. After the imperial army had passed the wall of Hadrian, they met with many difficulties and dangers. The enemy, too weak to encounter them in the open field in pitched battles, harassed them with continual skirmishes, and decoyed them into many ambushes. But their greatest difficulties arose from the nature and state of the country, which, being in many places covered with thick woods, and in others abounding in steep mountains, deep marshes, lakes and rivers, rendered their progress very slow and dangerous. To surmount these difficulties, the Emperor employed one part of his army in cutting down woods, draining lakes and marshes, making roads, and casting bridges over rivers, while the other defended the labourers from the enemy. By these means he at length penetrated into the very heart of Caledonia, and struck such terror into its inhabitants, that they renewed their supplications


for peace, which was at last granted them, on condition of relinquishing a part of their country, and delivering up their arms. The invincible resolution of the aged Emperor in this expedition is the more worthy of our admiration, that he was, during the greatest part of it, so much afflicted with the gout, as to be unable to ride, and was carried in a litter ; that he was in continual danger of his life by the machinations of his unnatural son Caracalla ; and that he beheld his troops sinking in such multitudes under their fatigues, or falling by the hands of their enemies. In this expedition (if we may believe a contemporary historian) he lost no fewer than fifty thousand men. But nothing could make him desist from his enterprise, till he had brought it to an honourable conclusion. \*

A.D. 207.

Severus, having concluded a peace with the Caledonians, conducted his army back into the north parts of the Roman province. Being now at leisure, and observing that Hadrian's rampart of earth was but a tender security to the province, against the incursions of the more northern Britons, he determined to erect a more substantial barrier. With this view, he employed his troops, for about two years, in building a stupendous wall of solid stone, twelve feet high, and eight feet thick, strengthened with many towers, castles, and stations at convenient distances, and accompanied with a ditch and mi-

A.D. 209.  
Severus  
builds his  
wall in  
Britain.

\* Herodian. l. 3. c. 46. Xiphilin. ex Dione, in Sever.

A.D. 209.  litary way. \* This prodigious wall (the vestiges of which are still visible in several places) was built nearly parallel to that of Hadrian, at the distance of a few paces further to the north, and from the east coast near Tinnmouth, to the Solway firth, at Boulness, on the west coast.†

A.D. 210.  
Severus  
unhappy.

Severus being now almost worn out with age, infirmities and toils, retired to York, in hopes of enjoying some repose and comfort as the fruit of so many victories, by which he had quelled all the commotions of the empire, and restored universal peace.‡ But he was disappointed in these hopes, and the last year of his life was very uncomfortable and unhappy. This was partly owing to the increase of his bodily infirmities, and partly to the vices and mutual enmity of his sons, and their impatient longing for his death, to which he was no stranger. The public affairs of Britain took also an unfavourable and vexatious turn, which added to his chagrin. For the Mæatae and Caledonians, being informed of the declining state of the Emperor's health, and the distracted condition of his family, renewed the war, in hopes of recovering that part of their country which they had been obliged to resign. The aged emperor, become peevish by his sufferings, flew into the most violent rage at the news of this revolt, and gave orders to exterminate these two

\* Spartian. vita Severi. Eutrop. Orosius, l. 7. c. 11.

† See Append. No. 9.

‡ Spartian. Script. Hist. Aug. p. 564.

nations, without sparing the very infants in their mother's womb. \*

A.D. 210.

But Severus being no longer able to appear at the head of his troops to execute his own designs, these cruel orders were not obeyed. For his eldest son Caracalla, whom he appointed to command the army in this expedition, instead of attacking the enemy, bent his whole endeavours to corrupt his soldiers, and prevail upon them to declare him sole emperor, after his father's death, to the exclusion of his brother Geta. Nay, that unnatural son, it is said, did not abstain from persuading the physicians and attendants of his aged and languishing parent, to put an end to his life, by some violent means. But nature prevented this crime; and the wretched Emperor expired at York, February the 4th, A.D. 211, not so much of his bodily infirmities, as of a broken heart. In his last moments, he appointed his two sons his heirs and successors in the empire; recommending them both, in the most earnest and affectionate manner, to his surrounding friends. As soon as Caracalla received the long expected and earnestly desired news of his father's death, he concluded a peace with the Mæatae and Caledonians, and marched his army southward, to take possession of the empire, which, to his unspeakable regret, he was obliged to share for some time with his brother Geta. The two young emperors did not continue long in

A.D. 211.  
The emperor Severus dies in Britain.

\* Xiphilin. ex Dione, in Sever.

A.D. 211. Britain, but made all possible haste to Rome, to enjoy the honours and pleasures of that great capital of the Roman world. \*

A.D. 211, to 284. After the departure of these emperors, the Roman historians take very little notice of the affairs of Britain for more than seventy years. This long silence of these writers probably proceeded from the great tranquillity which this island enjoyed in this period ; and that tranquillity seems to have been owing to the concurrence of the following causes. All the British nations to the south of Severus's wall had now quietly submitted to the Roman government, and had laid aside all thoughts of revolting ; and the authority of the Romans had put an end to the wars of these nations against one another. These two circumstances secured the internal quiet of South Britain. The emperors of these times, being either unwarlike, or employed at a great distance, contented themselves with the peaceable possession of their large and flourishing province in the south of Britain, and gave no disturbance to the British nations in the north. These nations, thinking themselves very happy in being allowed to enjoy their woods and mountains unmolested, and looking upon the wall of Severus, with its turrets, forts, and castles, as impregnable, made no attempts to break through it for many years. By this means, this island now enjoyed a longer peace than in any former or later period of its

Chasm in  
the history  
of Britain.

\* Niphilin. ex Dione, in Sever. Herodian. l. 5. c. 49, 50, 51.



history, and thereby happily escaped the attention of those writers, who were almost wholly employed in describing scenes of blood and slaughter. It is impossible to fill up this chasm which is left in the history of our country by the Roman historians, from any other quarter. A few unconnected, unimportant particulars, as the names of some of the governors of Britain in this period, &c. might be collected from inscriptions; \* but they could give the reader little or no satisfaction. It is also imagined that some of the thirty tyrants, as they are commonly called, who disturbed the empire in the reign of Gallienus, from A.D. 259 to A.D. 268, acted their part in Britain; because some of the coins of five or six of them have been found in the island. † If they did so, it is probable, that the part they acted was not very illustrious, as it hath not found a place in history.

A.D. 211,  
to 284.



In this year Dioclesian ascended the imperial throne, into which he soon after admitted Maximianus Herculius, as his partner in the toils and honours of that exalted station. Nor was it long before these two emperors, finding themselves unable to defend all the provinces of their prodigious empire, made choice of two Cæsars, Galerius Maximianus, and Constantius Chlorus. While these four great princes governed the Roman empire, the seas and coasts of Gaul and Britain began to be invested by new enemies.

A.D. 284,  
Carausius  
assumes  
the purple  
in Britain.

\* Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 289, 290, 276.

† Speed's Chron. p. 216.

A.D. 284.

These were the Franks and Saxons, two nations who afterwards made an illustrious figure in the history of Europe. At this time they acted chiefly as pirates, seizing such merchant-ships as they were able to master, and making short descents on the coast for the sake of plunder. Against these new enemies, who became daily more formidable by their ferocity and valour, the emperors prepared a very powerful fleet in the harbour of Boulogne, and gave the command of it to Carausius, an officer of great courage and experience, especially in sea affairs. If Carausius had been as faithful as he was capable, this would have been a very happy choice. But it soon appeared, that he had selfish and ambitious designs in view, and studied more to enrich himself than to execute his commission. For it was observed, that he never attacked the pirates as they were outward bound, but waited their return with their prizes, which he seized and appropriated to his own use, instead of restoring them to the original proprietors, or accounting for them to the imperial treasury. The Emperor Maximianus, being greatly alarmed at this proceeding, gave orders to have him privately put to death. But Carausius escaped this danger; and having engaged the fleet under his command to follow his fortunes, he sailed into Britain, and there assumed the purple. The army here, both legionaries and auxiliaries, soon after imitated the example of the fleet, and declared for him: by which means he became no


contemptible pretender to the imperial diadem; being absolute master of the narrow seas—of all the Roman dominions in this island—and of some important places on the Continent. He took also the most effectual measures to preserve his acquisitions, by making an alliance with the Franks and Saxons, and taking many of them into his fleet and army. The Emperor Maximianus, being engaged in other wars, and not having a fleet equal to that of Carausius, thought it most prudent to make peace with him, by granting him the title of Emperor, with the government of Britain, and of a few ports on the Continent; all of which he enjoyed in great tranquillity for several years. In this interval, it seems probable that he enlarged the limits of the Roman empire in Britain, by subduing the Mæatae; since we are told, that he repaired the wall between the Forth and Clyde, by adding to it seven castles, and some other works. \*

A.D. 284.

In the division of the empire this year, between the two emperors, Dioclesian and Maximianus, and their two Cæsars, Constantius and Galerius, all the provinces beyond the Alps westward fell to the share of Constantius Cæsar; who immediately resolved to attempt the recovery of Britain, one of these provinces, out of the hands of Carausius. For though Maximianus had been constrained, by the necessity of his affairs, to

A.D. 292.  
Carausius  
slain.

\* Aurel. Victor. *Entrop.* l. 9. c. 21, 22. Eumen. *Panegy.* 8, 9. *Antiq. Rutup.* p. 65. *Nemii Hist. Brit.* c. 19.

A.D. 292.  make peace with that adventurer, yet he was still considered as an usurper, by the other sovereigns of the empire. Constantius begun this war by besieging Boulogne, both by sea and land. This being one of the best harbours, and strongest places belonging to Carausius on the Continent, he made great efforts for its relief. But as he was not able to break through a strong bank of stone, with which Constantius had blocked up the port, he was obliged to desist, and suffer it to be taken. The imperial fleet not being yet sufficiently strong to undertake the invasion of Britain, Constantius gave orders for building ships in the several ports of Gaul; and in the mean time he employed his army in reducing some of the neighbouring nations who had revolted. Carausius applied himself with great diligence to prepare every thing necessary for resisting the threatened invasion. But while he was thus engaged, he was treacherously murdered at York, by Alectus, one of his chief officers and confidants; who immediately assumed the purple, and the government of Britain, which he enjoyed about three years without molestation. \*


A.D. 296. Constantius recovers Britain. All things being now prepared for the expedition into Britain, Constantius divided his fleet and army into two, in order to distract the attention of the enemy, by making a descent upon two different parts of the coast at the same time. He gave the command of one of these divisions

\* Eumen. Panegy. 8. Nennii Hist. Brit. c. 19.

to Asclepiodotus, the captain of his guards, an officer of great courage and conduct ; and led the other in person. The squadron commanded by Asclepiodotus, having happily escaped the fleet of Alectus near the Isle of Wight, by the favour of a great fog, landed without opposition on the neighbouring coast of Britain. As soon as Asclepiodotus had disembarked his troops, he set fire to his ships, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy, and that his own men might have no hopes but in victory. Alectus no sooner heard of the landing of this army, than he marched in a very hasty and tumultuary manner to attack them, leaving that part of the coast where he had encamped before quite defenceless. This gave an opportunity to Constantius, who arrived there soon after with the greatest part of his fleet, to land his troops without the least resistance, and to march immediately to join the other division of his army. But he received the agreeable news by the way, that Alectus was slain, and his army routed and dispersed by Asclepiodotus and the troops under his command. The danger, however, was not yet quite over, nor the victory complete. For a great body of Franks and Saxons, of which the army of Alectus had chiefly consisted, having escaped from the battle, entered London, and began to plunder it, in hopes of making their escape by sea, after having enriched themselves with the spoils of that great city. But the same felicity

A.D. 296.  




A.D. 296.  which had attended Constantius in the whole of this expedition appeared again on this occasion. For a part of his fleet and army, which had been separated from him in the fog, having entered the Thames, arrived at London in that critical moment, and, falling upon the plunderers, made a great slaughter of them, and preserved the city from ruin. By this series of happy events, Britain was re-united to the Roman empire, after it had been dismembered from it more than ten years; the seas were cleared of pirates, and the freedom of navigation restored. These events were no less agreeable to the Britons than to the Romans; and Constantius, who was a great and good prince, was received by them rather as a deliverer, and guardian angel, than a conqueror. \*

A.D. 305.  
Resignation of  
Dioclesian  
and Maximianus.

The two emperors, Dioclesian and Maximianus, being satiated with the honours, and wearied with the toils and cares of empire, took the singular resolution of resigning their authority, and retiring into a private station. This resolution they executed on the first day of May this year, and their two Cæsars, Constantius and Galerius, were declared emperors. In the division of the empire between these two princes, the western provinces fell to the share of Constantius, who resided in Britain, and had some disputes with the Caledonians, of which we know no particulars, but that he reduced them to sue for peace. This

\* Eutrop. l. 9. c. 22. Eumen. Panegy. 8.

excellent prince did not long enjoy the imperial dignity; but, falling sick at York, on his return from his Caledonian expedition, he died there July 25th, A. D. 306; having in his last moments declared his illustrious son his heir and successor in the empire. \*

A.D. 305.

Constantine the Great was the son of the emperor Constantius by his first wife Helena, a princess greatly celebrated for her piety and virtue. Many of our ancient and some of our modern historians affirm positively, that this illustrious princess was a native of Britain, and the daughter of a British king named Coil; and not a few of them are equally positive, that her illustrious son was also born in this island. † Both these facts may be true; but it must be confessed, that neither of them is supported by the testimony of any contemporary writer. It is more certain that Constantine the Great began his auspicious reign at York, where he was present at his father's death, and where he was immediately after saluted emperor, with the greatest and most universal joy. ‡ It is more probably to his accession to empire, than to his birth, that the following exclamation of his panegyrist refers: "O fortunate Britain! more happy than all other lands, for thou hast first beheld Constantine Cæsar!" § The new emperor staid


A.D. 306.  
Accession  
of Con-  
stantine  
the Great.

\* Eutrop. l. 10. c. 1. Aurel. Vict. in Constantino.

† Vide Usser. de primord. Eccles. Brit. c. 8.

‡ Eutrop. l. 10. c. 11. Aurel. Victor. in Constantino.

§ Eumen. Panegy. 9.

A.D. 506.  some time in Britain, to pay the last honours to his father's ashes, to finish the remains of the war with the Mæataë and Caledonians (who about this time began to be called by the new names of Picts and Scots), and to settle the peace of this island on a solid basis. Having accomplished these designs, and having recruited his army with a great number of British youth, by whom he was much beloved, he departed to the Continent, to reduce the Franks, who had revolted, and to dispute the empire with Maxentius, the son of the abdicated Emperor Maximianus, who had assumed the purple at Rome. \* One of our greatest antiquaries, and best historians, is of opinion, that Constantine the Great returned again into Britain some years after his first departure, and that it was then he subdued the nations in the north parts of this island. † But of this there is not sufficient evidence; and the short hint in Eusebius, on which that writer founds his opinion, most probably refers to what Constantine performed here, in the beginning of his reign. ‡ For this island seems to have enjoyed a profound peace, from that time to the death of this great prince, which happened May 22, A.D. 337.

A.D. 337.  
Constantine, Constans, and Constantius, emperors.

Constantine the Great was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius; among whom the provinces of the empire

\* Euseb. Panegy. 10. Lactant. c. 26.

† Camb. Brit. p. 98.

‡ Euseb. de vita Constant. l. 2. c. 19.

were divided. Constantine, the eldest of these princes, who had Gaul, Spain, Britain, and part of Germany, was never contented with his share of his father's dominions, which he thought inferior to that of either of his brothers. After several fruitless complaints and negociations, he at last had recourse to arms, and, invading the territories of his brother Constans, fell into an ambush near Aquileia, and was cut in pieces, with the greatest part of his army, in the spring of the year 340. \*

A.D. 337.

Constans slain.

His brother being thus slain, Constans seized all his dominions, and became sole master of the Western empire. This Emperor having established peace and tranquillity in all his provinces on the Continent, imposed an extraordinary tax upon his subjects, prepared a great fleet, and visited his British dominions in the beginning of this year, in order to chastise the Scots and Picts, for their attempts upon the Roman province. The particulars of this expedition are lost with the first part of Ammianus Marcellinus's history, in which they were recorded. If we could depend on the testimony of his medals, we should be led to believe, that Constans had slaughtered great multitudes of the enemy on this occasion. But medals were by this time become great flatterers, and made a mighty matter of every trifling advantage. †

A.D. 343.  
Constans visits Britain.

\* Entrop. l. 10. c. 5.

† Ammian. Marcel. l. 20. c. 1. Du Cange de infer. ævi aum. c. 53.

A.D. 345. Firmicus, who seems disposed to magnify this exploit of the Emperor as much as possible, says nothing of his victories, but celebrates, in a very high strain, his courage in passing the sea in winter, and terrifying the Britons by his arrival at that season of the year.\* Libanius even asserts, that there was no war in Britain at this time that required the presence of the Emperor.†

A.D. 350.  
Magnen-  
tius usurps  
the em-  
pire.

Constans, after his return to the Continent, by neglecting his affairs, and pursuing his pleasures with too much eagerness, ruined his health, and lost both the esteem and affection of the army, and of his other subjects. This encouraged some of his chief officers to conspire his destruction, and to set up Magnentius, one of their own number, in his room. This design was executed in the city of Autun, on the 18th of January this year, amidst the festivity of a great entertainment, at which Magnentius suddenly appearing arrayed in purple, was saluted emperor, first by the officers, then by the soldiers, and at last by the people. The unhappy Constans, who was then at some distance, engaged in a party of pleasure, having received intelligence of this revolution, attempted to save his life, by flying towards Spain; but being abandoned by all the world, was overtaken and put to death at Elna in Rousillon.‡ Britain, and

\* Firmic. de error. prof. relig. c. 29.

† Liban. Orat. 5.

‡ Eutrop. l. 10, c. 6. Amm. Marcel. l. 15, c. 5. Zosim. l. 2,



all the other provinces on this side the Alps, immediately submitted to the usurper, and Italy soon after followed their example. A.D. 350.

Constantius, emperor of the East, the youngest and only surviving son of Constantine the Great, no sooner received the news of this unexpected revolution, than he laid aside all his other designs, and made great preparations for revenging the death of his brother, and recovering his dominions. Marching at the head of a great army into the West, he defeated Magnentius in one of the most bloody battles that ever was fought, near Mursa in Pannonia, on the 28th of September, A. D. 351. The usurper, having sustained several other losses, and dreading to fall into the hands of his justly enraged enemy, first slew his mother and other relations, and then killed himself at Lyons, on August the 11th, A.D. 353; and Britain, with all the other provinces of the West, submitted with pleasure to the conqueror, who became sole master of the whole Roman empire. Constantius appointed Gratianus Funarius, father of Valentinian, who was afterwards emperor, to be governor, or, as he was then called, vicar of Britain. Gratianus does not seem to have enjoyed that dignity long, as we find Martinus soon after in that station. \*

If Constantius had acted with clemency and moderation after his success, he would have se-

A.D. 354.  
Severity  
of Con-  
stantius.

\* Eutrop. l. 10. c. 6. Zosim. l. 2. Amm. Marcel. l. 10. Jul. Orat.

A.D. 354. cured his own glory, and the felicity of his subjects, who were universally disposed to the most cheerful submission. But corrupted by prosperity, and yielding to the persuasions of his courtiers, who hoped to enrich themselves by confiscation, he set on foot a cruel inquisition after all who had favoured the late usurper, or had submitted to his authority. Nothing was heard of, in all the provinces of the Western empire, but imprisonments, tortures, confiscations, and executions. Britain had her full share of these calamities. One Paulus a Spaniard, and secretary to the Emperor, was sent as commissary or inquisitor into this island; who executed his commission with the most flagrant injustice, and unrelenting cruelty, involving the innocent and guilty in one common ruin. Martinus, the governor, a man of virtue and humanity, having endeavoured in vain to put a stop to these proceedings, drew his sword, and attempted to kill Paulus; but missing his blow, and knowing that he could expect no mercy after such an attempt, he plunged it into his own bosom, and expired on the spot.\* Nor did the infamous Paulus triumph much longer in his villanies; but came to an end suitable to his crimes; for he was soon after burnt alive by command of the Emperor Julian.†

\* Amm. Marcel. l. 14. c. 5. Liban. Orat. 12.

† Amm. Marcel. l. 22. c. 3.

The Roman province in South Britain had received very little disturbance, from the British nations in the north, for about one hundred and fifty years. The wall of Severus, being then in full repair, and defended by regular garrisons, effectually protected the province from all insults on that side. This long tranquillity had enabled the provincial Britons, with the instructions and assistance of the Romans, greatly to improve their country, and render it a very inviting object to their less industrious, but more warlike neighbours. Accordingly, the Scots and Picts, tempted by the prospect of plunder, made an incursion, by some means or other, into the province, about the beginning of the year. Julian the Apostate, who had lately been declared Cæsar, and soon after became emperor, had the chief direction of affairs in the Western empire at this time, and resided in Gaul. Having received intelligence of this invasion of the Roman territories in Britain, he sent over Lupicinus, an officer of rank and character, with some cohorts of light-armed troops, to assist in repulsing the enemy; who no sooner heard of his arrival, than they retired into their own country with their booty. Lupicinus proceeded no farther than to London, where, having settled some affairs, he returned to the Continent.\* The reinforcement of the Roman army, and their greater vigilance and activity, deterred the

A.D. 360.


 Incursion  
of the  
Scots and  
Picts.

\* Amm. Marcel. l. 20. c. 1.

A.D. 360. Scots and Picts from making any further attempts upon the province for some time ; and they continued quiet, during the short reign of the Emperor Julian, and the still shorter one of his successor Jovian.

A.D. 364.  
Incursions  
of the  
Scots,  
Picts, and  
Attacots,  
and depredations  
of the Franks  
and Saxons.

Soon after the accession of Valentinian and his brother Valens to the imperial throne, the empire was assaulted almost on all sides, by the surrounding nations. In Britain, while the piratical Franks and Saxons plundered the southern coasts, the Scots, Picts and Attacots, \* invaded the Roman province on the north. These nations, having found, by their late attempt in the reign of Julian, that the wall of Severus was not impregnable, and that the country within it, being rich, afforded abundance of valuable plunder ; they rushed into it with their united forces, and pushed their depredations much further than they had done before. As they advanced, they had frequent encounters with the Roman forces stationed in this island ; and in one of these, they slew Bulchobandes the Roman general, and Nectaridius, count of the Saxon shore.† As soon as the Emperor Valentinian received intelligence of this formidable invasion, and of the death of his generals, he sent over Severus, an officer of distinction in his household, to command in Britain ; who, being soon after recalled, was succeeded by Jovinus, a captain who had acquired great military fame in

\* See chap. 3. sect. 19.

† Amm. Marcel. l. 27. c. 9.

Germany. But as neither of these generals brought any considerable reinforcement of troops with them into Britain, they were not able to expel the enemy from the Roman province ; where they carried on their destructive ravages for three years successively, before they received an effectual check.

At length the Emperor Valentinian, being determined to put an end to the war in Britain, and deliver this province from these cruel plunderers, appointed Theodosius, one of the best and wisest men and greatest generals of that age, to command in this island, and sent him over with an army. At his arrival, Theodosius found his province in a very deplorable condition. The enemy had penetrated as far as London, and had collected a prodigious mass of booty, as well as taken a great multitude of men, women, and children prisoners. The Roman general, having assembled his army with great expedition, fell upon the enemy while they were loaden with plunder and incumbered with prisoners, and obliged them to fly, leaving behind them all their prey and captives. He set all the prisoners immediately at liberty ; and having bestowed part of the spoils, whose owners could not be found, on his soldiers, he restored the rest to the original proprietors ; gaining as much glory by his justice and generosity after the victory, as he had done by his wisdom and valour in the battle. He marched his victorious army to London (then called Augusta), which he entered in

A.D. 364.

A.D. 367.  
Theodo-  
sius gover-  
nor of  
Britain.



A.D. 367. triumph, amidst the joyful acclamations of the inhabitants, who viewed him as their deliverer from impending ruin. Here, reflecting on the state of the country, and the further prosecution of the war, he invited over Civilis, a person of great probity and wisdom, and committed to him the administration of the civil government: he also sent for Dulcitius, a captain renowned for his courage and conduct, to assist him in the command of the army. During the late times of confusion, many Roman officers, soldiers and others, had deserted to the enemy, either through fear, or a desire of sharing with them in their plunder, and still continued with them, through despair of mercy. To reclaim these, Theodosius issued a proclamation, promising a pardon to all who returned to their duty before a certain day. This gracious and prudent measure produced the happiest effects, great numbers embracing the promised amnesty. \*

A.D. 368.  
Great suc-  
cess and  
wise con-  
duct of  
Theodo-  
sius.

Theodosius, having spent the winter in establishing order and tranquillity in the south parts of Britain, took the field in the spring, directing his march northward. The enemy every where fled before him, abandoning not only the open country, but also many forts, stations, and cities which they had seized, though not without leaving behind them many marks of their rapacious and destructive dispositions. The Romans still advancing, took possession of the

places which the enemy had abandoned, and repaired such of them as they had destroyed, until they recovered the whole country to the south of Severus's wall, which had long been the boundary of the empire on that side. But Theodosius, not yet satiated with victory and success, pursued the flying enemy still further, and drove them beyond the wall of Antoninus Pius, which he repaired, and made once more the frontier of the Roman territories in Britain. The country between the two walls he reduced into the form of a province, which he named Valentia, in honour of the emperor Valens. But while this excellent person was engaged in these glorious toils, a dangerous plot was forming against his authority and life. One Valentinus, who had been banished into Britain for his crimes, was the author of this conspiracy, in which he found means to engage several other exiles, and even some Roman officers and soldiers. But this plot was happily discovered when it was on the point of being carried into execution; and Theodosius having commanded Valentinus and a few of the most guilty of his accomplices to be put to death, very wisely and generously prohibited any further inquiry or prosecution. \*

Theodosius was no less fit for the cabinet than the camp, and excelled as much in the arts of securing and improving, as of making conquests.

A.D. 369.  
Theodosius much beloved in Britain.

\* Amm. Marcel. l. 28. c. 5. 7.

A.D. 569. Of this he gave many proofs while he commanded in Britain. During the long peace which had reigned in this island, the walls, forts, and castles which had been built for the protection of the province, were very much neglected, and military discipline very much relaxed. He repaired the former, and revived the latter. Having discovered that the *Ar-cani*, a kind of light troops, who were stationed in the advanced posts on the frontiers, and designed to act as scouts or spies, had betrayed their trust, and corresponded with the enemy, he cashiered them with disgrace, and established another corps in their room, for that important purpose. He corrected many abuses in the collection of the public revenues, and even persuaded the Emperor to make some abatement in the taxes. He gave all possible encouragement and assistance to the provincials, in repairing the damages which their villages, towns, and cities had sustained in the late incursions. In one word, from the greatest confusion, distress, and misery, he brought the Roman territories in Britain to a state of the most perfect order, happiness, and security.\* The many great and good actions which this excellent person performed in this island, as well as in other places, not only furnished a theme to the best poets of that age,† but

\* *Amm. Marcel. l. 28. c. 5. 7.*

† *Ille Caledoniis posuit qui castra pruinis*

*Qui medios Libyæ sub casside pertulit æstus,*

excited the warmest gratitude and affection in all who had enjoyed the benefit of his wise and virtuous administration. When he was recalled by the Emperor, to be raised to one of the highest dignities in the empire, he was attended to the place of his embarkation by infinite multitudes of people, who loaded him with blessings, and pursued him with the most fervent prayers for his prosperity.

The Roman territories in Britain enjoyed the most profound tranquillity for several years after the departure of Theodosius. The south coasts were secured by a powerful fleet against the depredations of the Saxons; and the Scots and Picts had received so severe a check, that they made no attempts upon the northern frontiers. This tranquillity might have been of much longer continuance, if the provincial Britons, as well as the Roman soldiers, had not espoused the cause of an unfortunate pretender to the imperial purple. This was Maximus, an officer of great reputation in the Roman army in Britain. The Emperor Gratian, the son and successor of Valentinian, finding himself and his infant brother Valentinian II. very unequal to

A.D. 369.



A.D. 375.  
Maximus  
assumes  
the purple  
in Britain.

Terribilis Mauro, debellatorque Britanni  
Littoris, ac pariter Boriæ vastator et Austri.  
Quid rigor æternus? Cæli quid sydera prosunt?  
Ignotumque fretum? Maduerunt Saxoni fuso  
Orcades, incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule,  
Scotorum cumulos flevit glacialis Ierne,

Claudian. Panegy. Theod.

A.D. 375. the task of governing and protecting all the provinces of their mighty empire, declared Theodosius (son of that Theodosius who had lately commanded with so much glory in this island) his partner in the empire, on January 16th, A. D. 379, and sent him into the east to fight against the Goths. This measure, which proved very fortunate to the empire, was highly offensive to Maximus, who having served in an equal rank, and with equal reputation, thought himself equally entitled to a place on the imperial throne. He determined therefore to seize by force what he could not obtain by favour, and assumed the purple in this island, A. D. 381. \*

A.D. 385.  
Maxi-  
mus's ex-  
pedition  
to the Con-  
tinent.

If Maximus could have contented himself with the dominion of the Roman territories in Britain, he might probably have enjoyed it long, without much molestation. Though he was a Spaniard by birth, he had resided many years in this island, had married the daughter of a British chieftain, and, by his good services under Theodosius the elder, he had contributed not a little to the present peace and prosperity of the country. † These things greatly endeared him to the provincial Britons, who espoused his cause with as much warmth as the army had done. But this island appeared too narrow a sphere for his ambition, and he aspired to the possession of the whole Western empire ; the present circum-

\* Zosim. l. 4.

† Rowland's *Mona Antiq.* p. 166, 167.



stances of which seemed to flatter him with the hopes of success. Valentinian II., one of the reigning Emperors of the West, was still in his childhood ; his elder brother Gratian was a weak unpopular prince, who had given general disgust to the Roman soldiers, by his fondness for strangers ; and Theodosius, his most formidable rival, was fully employed in the East. To seize this favourable opportunity for accomplishing his designs, he enlisted prodigious numbers of the British youth, who crowded with eagerness to his standard ; and, having trained them to the use of arms, he transported them with his veteran troops to the Continent. Soon after he had landed his army near the mouth of the Rhine, he received a great accession of strength, by the Roman troops in that neighbourhood, and in Germany, declaring in his favour. The Emperor Gratian, having raised a very numerous army, advanced towards Maximus to give him battle ; but after some skirmishing, being betrayed by his generals, and abandoned by his troops, he fled towards Lyons, where he fell into an ambush, and was slain, on August 25th, A.D. 383. By this means Maximus obtained possession of all those provinces of the empire which had been under the immediate government of Gratian. Elated with this success, he declared Victor, who was his son by a British lady, his partner in the empire, which attached the Britons in his army still more firmly to his cause. Nor did he stop here ; but by various

A.D. 383.

A.D. 387. means he obliged Valentinian II. to abandon Italy, A.D. 387, leaving him sole master of the Western empire. But this great prosperity was not of long continuance. For Valentinian having implored the protection of Theodosius, Emperor of the East, that great prince generously espoused his cause, and marched into the West, at the head of a gallant army, to restore him to his dominions. Maximus was defeated in two great battles; and having retired to Aquileia, \* he was there seized by his own soldiers and delivered to Theodosius, who commanded him to

A.D. 388. be put to death, in August, A.D. 388. The British forces in the party of Maximus, were not present in these unfortunate engagements; having been sent a little before with the young Emperor Victor (to whom, as their countryman, they were peculiarly devoted) into Gaul, to make head against the Franks. But Victor was soon after defeated and slain, and his army put to flight. The unhappy Britons, who had followed the fortunes of this young prince, were now in a deplorable situation: in a foreign country; surrounded with enemies; without a leader to conduct them; or ships to carry them home.

\* *Nona inter claras Aquileia cieberis urbes,  
Itala ad Illyricos objecta colonia montes,  
Mœnibus et portu celeberrima; sed majus illud  
Eminet, extremo quod te sub tempore, legit,  
Solverat exacto cui justa piacula lustrò  
Maximus, armigeri quondam sub nomine lixæ;  
Fœlix qui tanti spectatrix læta triumphii,  
Punisti Ausonio Rutupinum Marte latronem, Ausonias,*

In this extremity, they directed their route to the north-west point of Gaul (which was then called *Aremorica*), in hopes of finding the means of passing from thence into Cornwall. But being disappointed in this, and having met with a kind reception from the *Belgæ*, who then inhabited that coast, they settled there, and never returned again into Britain. The number of these settlers was so great, that they are said to have given their own name to that part of the continent, which was thenceforward called *Brittany*; and to have laid the foundation of that friendly intercourse, and remarkable resemblance, which so long subsisted between the inhabitants of that district, and the ancient Britons of this island.

South Britain very soon and very sensibly felt the fatal consequences of the emigration of so great a number of her bravest sons. For the Scots, Picts, Franks, and Saxons, encouraged by this circumstance, renewed their incursions and depredations. But *Theodosius the Great*, who had become sole master of the Roman world, by the death of *Valentinian II*, and of the usurper *Eugenius*, sent *Chrysantus*, a general of great reputation, as his vicar into Britain, to put a stop to these ravages. This officer, who afterwards became a bishop, executed his commission with great ability and success; expelled the enemies, and restored the tranquillity of the province. \*

A.D. 588.

A.D. 593.  
Incursions  
and depredations of  
the Scots,  
Picts,  
Franks,  
and Saxons.

\* *Socrat. Hist. Eccles.* l. 7. c. 12.

A.D. 395.

Another  
invasion of  
the Scots  
and Picts.

The peace and prosperity which Britain and the other provinces of the Roman empire enjoyed under the protection of the great Theodosius, was not of long duration. For that illustrious prince ended his glorious life and reign at Milan on January 17th this year: bequeathing to his eldest son, Arcadius, the empire of the East, and to the youngest, Honorius, that of the West. He put this last prince (who was then only ten years of age), and his dominions, under the tuition of his friend Stilico, who had been the companion of all his toils and victories. As soon as the death of Theodosius, and the succession of his infant son, were known, an inundation of enemies poured into the Western empire on all sides, and seemed to threaten it with immediate and total ruin. Amongst others, the Scots and Picts invaded the Roman province in this island, and pursued their destructive ravages with great ferocity. But at length Stilico, who for some time discharged his important trust with fidelity and honour, sent a reinforcement of troops into Britain, which expelled the enemies out of that province, and restored its peace.\* This exploit of Stilico was esteemed so famous and important, that it is far from being forgotten by his poetical panegyrist.†

\* Claud. de bello Gallico.

† Me quoque vicinis percuntem gentibus, inquit,  
Munivit Stilico, totam cum Scotus Hibernem

But notwithstanding this, and some other small advantages of the Roman arms, the distresses of the western empire daily increased and multiplied. Africa was dismembered from it ; Thrace, Hungary, Austria, and several other provinces, were desolated ; and the dreadful Alaric was bending his destructive course towards Rome itself, at the head of an infinite multitude of Goths, Vandals, Alans, and other fierce barbarians. In this extremity, the troops which had lately been sent into this island was recalled. The incursions of the Scots and Picts, which immediately followed, were not the worst consequences of this measure. For a spirit of mutiny and rebellion seizing the Roman troops which were constantly stationed in Britain, they laid aside all regard to the reigning Emperor, and invested one of their own officers, named Marcus, with the purple. But they soon became weary of this idol of their own erection, pulled him down, put him to death, and set up one Gratian in his room. Nor did the second choice answer their expectations, or continue long in their good graces ; and in less than four months after his elevation, they deposed and murdered him.\* Still persisting in their rebellious dispositions, and becoming quite wanton

A.D. 405.

Marcus,  
Gratian,  
and Con-  
stantine,  
successively  
made Em-  
perors by  
the army  
in Britain.

A.D. 407.

*Movit, et infesto spumavit remige Thetis.*

*Illius effectum curis, ne bella timorem*

*Scotica, nec Pictum tremorem, nec littore toto*

*Prospicere dubiis venientem Saxona ventis.*

*Claud. in laud. Stil.*

\* Zosim. l. 6. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 11.



A.D. 407. and capricious in their conduct, they next set up one Constantine, an officer of inferior rank, merely, as it is said, on account of his bearing the beloved and auspicious name of Constantine.

A.D. 408. This person, being either more capable or more fortunate, made a much greater figure than his two short-lived predecessors. To keep his troops employed, and prevent their cabaling against his person or authority, he meditated an expedition into Gaul. In order to this, he enlisted great numbers of the British youth; and having trained them to the use of arms, he transported them to the Continent, together with the best of his regular troops. The first undertakings of this adventurer were crowned with remarkable success. He got possession of the two rich and extensive provinces of Gaul and Spain, declared his eldest son Constans (who had been a monk) his colleague, and fixed the seat of his empire at Arles, which he named Constantia. But this gale of prosperity was not of long continuance. For having failed in his attempt upon Italy, and quarrelled with his best friend Gerontius, his affairs declined faster than they had advanced. His son Constans was intercepted and slain by Gerontius, at Vienne in Gaul, and, shutting himself up in his capital city of Arles, he was taken and put to death in September, A.D. 411.\* The British youth who had followed Constantine into Gaul, retired into Brittany after his death, and there met with

\* Sozomen, l. 9. c. 11, 12, 13, 14.

a kind reception from their countrymen, amongst whom they settled. \*

A.D. 408.

After the death of the usurper Constantine, the Roman province in Britain returned to the obedience of the Emperor Honorius, who sent Victorinus with some troops for its recovery and defence. This general struck terror into all his enemies in this island, and merited the poetical encomium below.† But the increasing distresses of the empire obliged Honorius to recall Victorinus, with all his troops, out of the Roman province in this island, and to leave it in a very defenceless state; occasioned not only by the departure of these troops, but also by the late great emigrations of the British youth, with the two usurpers, Maximus and Constantine.

A.D. 412.

Roman  
army re-  
called from  
Britain.

As soon as the Scots and Picts received intelligence that the Romans had withdrawn their standing army out of Britain, they prepared to invade the territories of the provincial Britons, hoping to meet with little opposition. But on this occasion they found themselves mistaken, and met with a warmer reception than they expected. For though the regular forces of the Romans were gone, there were still many veteran soldiers and others, who, having obtained houses and lands in the several colonies, were unwilling to abandon them; and the Britons, encouraged

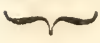
A.D. 414.

The other  
Romans  
leave Bri-  
tain.

\* Speed's Chron. p. 280.

† *Conscius oceanus virtutum, conscia Thule,*

*Et quæcunque ferox arva Britannus arat.*—Rutilius Claud.

A.D. 414.  and assisted by these veterans, took up arms, and repulsed the invaders, \* These incursions, however, being constantly renewed for several years, rendered the country equally uncomfortable and unsafe, and pointed out the necessity of some more powerful protection. Application was accordingly made to Rome for assistance; but Honorius being still involved in great difficulties, assured them that he could grant them none; gave up all his claims to their allegiance, and exhorted them to defend themselves. The Romans, who still remained in Britain, discouraged by this reply, and despairing of ever enjoying any tranquillity in a country subject to continual incursions, disposed of their estates, and, carrying with them their money and effects, retired to the Continent. †

A.D. 416.  
The Britons, invaded by the Scots and Picts, obtain a legion from the Romans.

The provincial Britons were now in a more dangerous condition than ever, having lost not only the flower of their own youth, and the Roman regular forces, but even those few Romans who had lingered some time longer amongst them, and by their encouragement, example, and assistance, had enabled them to make some defence against their enemies. Besides this, both their civil and military government were now dissolved; and by the policy of the Romans, they had been long deprived of the use and exercise of arms; so that they now remained a timid disorderly multitude, ready to become an easy

\* Zosim. l. 6.

† Id. ibid.

prey to the first bold invader. Nor was it long before they were invaded. For their dangerous and vigilant neighbours, the Scots and Picts, informed of their helpless state, renewed their incursions, and, meeting with little resistance, they pushed them further, and with greater ferocity than usual. These two nations, passing the firths of Forth and Clyde, overrun and plundered the whole province of Valentia, between the walls of Antoninus and Severus, and threatened the other provinces with the same fate. In this extremity, the unhappy Britons despatched messengers to Rome, who represented the deplorable state of their country, in the most affecting terms, to the Emperor Honorius, earnestly implored his protection, and promised the most cheerful submission to his authority. The Emperor, moved by their entreaties, and being more at leisure than formerly, by the expulsion of the Goths out of Gaul, and some other favourable events, sent over one legion to the assistance of the Britons. This legion arriving unexpectedly, and falling upon the Scots and Picts as they were straggling about the country in quest of plunder, slew great numbers of them, and obliged the rest to retire with precipitation beyond their firths. The Romans, having thus performed the service for which they were sent, and exhorted the Britons to repair the walls of Antoninus Pius, between the firths of Forth and Clyde, to protect them against the future at-

A.D. 416.

A.D. 416. tempts of their enemies, they returned in triumph to the Continent. \*

A.D. 418.  
The Britons obtained the assistance of a legion a second time from the Romans.

The wall of Antoninus, having been originally built of turf, and now repaired with the same materials, proved but a very slender security to the country within it, on this occasion. For as soon as the Scots and Picts were informed of the departure of the Roman legion, they prepared for a repetition of their inroads. Some of them passed the firths in their little boats, while others made their way over the wall; and all of them together, pouring like an irresistible torrent into the country of the provincial Britons, bore down all before them. The wretched inhabitants, seeing nothing but inevitable destruction before their eyes, from which they were unable to defend themselves, had again recourse to Rome for protection. Their ambassadors, it is said, appeared before the Emperor with their garments rent, ashes upon their heads, and all the marks of the most deep distress; they painted the misery of their country in the most lively colours, and with many cries and tears implored assistance, that the Roman name might not become contemptible in Britain, and that those provinces, which had flourished so long under their protection, might not be utterly destroyed. These important supplications proved effectual, and the Emperor sent a second legion into Britain under the command of Gallio of Ravenna.

\* Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 12. Chron. p. 26. Gildas Hist. p. 11. 12.




This legion arrived suddenly in autumn, and again surprised and defeated the plundering Picts and Scots, killing great numbers of them, and obliging those who escaped to take shelter behind their firths, in those woods and mountains whither they had been accustomed to convey their annual booty. This victorious legion did not return so soon to the Continent as the former had done, but remained some time in South Britain, to put that country in a better posture of defence against the future attacks of its restless and ever returning enemies. Being now convinced that it was impossible to render the wall of Antoninus an effectual barrier, because the enemies so easily passed the firths in their curroghs, and landed within it; that wall was slighted, and the whole province of Valentia was given up in order to secure the rest more effectually. With this view, the wall of Severus, which had fallen to decay, through the injuries of time and of the enemy, was thoroughly repaired by the united labours of the legion and the provincial Britons, with solid stone and lime. The expense of this great work was borne by the cheerful contributions of many private persons, and of the several British states, who considered it as one of the chief means of their future safety. But as walls and bulwarks are of little use, without brave, expert, and well-armed soldiers to defend them, the Roman general gave the Britons exact models of all the several kinds of arms, with ample instructions how to make and use them;

A.D. 418.



A.D. 419.


A.D. 419.  exhorting them to act bravely in defence of their country, their wives, children, and liberties. He represented to them, that they were not inferior to their enemies in bodily strength, or any natural endowment, and that they needed only to rouse their native courage, and exert a proper spirit to bid defiance to their dreaded adversaries. Gallio having finished all the works which were thought necessary for the defence of the northern frontiers against the Picts and Scots, A.D. 420. marched into the South, where his fleet lay; and because these coasts were sometimes infested by the Franks and Saxons, he there built several castles, at proper intervals, with extensive prospects towards the sea, for the security of these parts. After having conferred all these benefits, this great general honestly acquainted the Britons, that they were to expect no further assistance from the Romans, whose affairs would no longer permit them to undertake any more of these troublesome expeditions for their relief: and then this last Roman legion setting sail, they bid a final adieu to Britain, about four hundred and seventy-five years after their ancestors had first landed in it, under the conduct of Julius Cæsar. \*

A.D. 421.  
History of  
Britain  
from the  
final de-  
parture of

We are now come to that calamitous period which intervened between the final departure of the Romans, and the arrival of the Saxons. But since this is certainly one of the most melancholy

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. c. 12. Gildæ Hist. c. 15, 14.


periods of the British history, and since the accounts which we have of these unhappy times are as imperfect as they are uncomfortable, it will not be proper to dwell long upon them.

A.D. 421.  
  
 the Romans to the arrival of the Saxons. State of the Britons.

The provincial Britons were now left in the full and free possession of a large, rich, and beautiful country, adorned with many noble monuments of Roman art and industry; crowded with cities, towns and villages, united to one another by the most substantial roads; and the whole defended by a stupendous wall, which hath been the admiration of all succeeding ages. But notwithstanding all this seeming prosperity, they were a very disconsolate and unhappy people. They were so far from rejoicing in the recovery of their freedom, that they considered the retreat of their lordly masters as a great misfortune; and beheld the departure of the Romans with more dismay than their brave ancestors had beheld their first approach. Conscious of their own unwarlike character, of their disunited and unsettled state, their imaginations were haunted with the most dreadful apprehensions of their ferocious enemies.

Nor was it long before the apprehensions of the wretched Britons were realized. For when the Scots and Picts had received intelligence that the Romans were gone out of the island, with a resolution never to return, they issued from their woods and mountains with great confidence, and in greater numbers than they ever had done before. Finding the wall of Antoninus unguard-

A.D. 422.  
 Scots and Picts plunder the country between the walls.

A.D. 422.  ed, and the province of Valentia abandoned, they overrun it without meeting with the least resistance or opposition. Had it been their design to acquire new and more comfortable habitations, in a better soil and climate, they might have settled peaceably in this large and fine country, between the two walls. But, like their ancestors the Caledonians, their incursions were made, not so much with a view to conquest as to plunder, which they carried home, and enjoyed with the highest relish amongst their own hills. For several years successively they wasted and plundered this district which had fallen into their hands, carrying home for their winter's provision what they could not consume upon the spot.\*

A.D. 426.  
Scots and  
Picts break  
through  
Severus's  
wall.

The country which lay between the walls being at length so desolated, that it afforded no more booty to the destroyers, they began to meditate an incursion into the rich and yet untouched provinces beyond the wall of Severus. When they approached this bulwark, they found it completely repaired, its turrets, forts, and castles filled with garrisons, and its ramparts crowded with armed men, who seemed to threaten destruction to all who dared to advance within their reach. But all this was formidable only in appearance. For the Britons had profited so little by the military instructions of their late masters, that, instead of planting proper guards and sentinels, and relieving one another, their whole

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. c. 12. Gildæ Hist. c. 13. 1-4.

number had stood several days and nights upon the ramparts, without intermission. By this means their limbs were quite benumbed with cold, fatigue, and fasting; and the Scots and Picts found very little danger in attacking such torpid adversaries, who suffered themselves to be pulled down from the wall with hooks, and dashed against the ground. In a word, after a very faint resistance, the Britons abandoned the wall, and endeavoured to save themselves by flight. But the Scots and Picts breaking in, like hungry wolves into a sheepfold, pursued them with great slaughter, plundered the country, and returned home laden with booty. In the same manner did these unwelcome guests repeat their destructive visits for several years, to the unspeakable terror and damage of the wretched Britons. \*


A.D. 426.

Even these pernicious incursions were not the only troubles with which the unhappy Britons were now afflicted. Destitute of order, law, and government, civil rage and rapine prevailed in every corner; and they are said to have discovered much more spirit in robbing and destroying one another, than in defending themselves against the common enemy. After the dissolution of the Roman government, many petty tyrants were set up in different parts of the country; and soon after pulled down and put to death, to make room for others still more flagi-

A.D. 436.  
Internal  
confusion,  
famine,  
and pesti-  
lence.

\* Bede Hist. Eccles. c. 12. Gildas Hist. c. 15, 14.



A.D. 436.  tious. Great numbers of the inhabitants, driven to despair by so many miseries, neglected to plough and sow their lands, forsook their houses, and, roaming up and down in the woods, led a savage kind of life, on the spontaneous productions of the earth, and what they could catch in hunting. To crown the whole, this neglect of agriculture naturally produced a famine, which was followed by a pestilence; and these two dreadful scourges put an end at once to the lives and sufferings of great multitudes of the unhappy Britons.\*

A.D. 440. These dire calamities, which seemed to threaten South Britain with utter ruin and depopulation, were productive of one happy consequence. The Scots and Picts, dreading infection, and the efforts of the desperate Britons which had been fatal to many of them, and finding little plunder in a land of famine, desisted from their incursions, and remained quiet at home for several years. Encouraged by this unexpected return of tranquillity, the Britons issued from their lurking-places, repaired their houses, and applied to agriculture. Their lands, meeting with friendly seasons, after so many years of rest, produced all kinds of grain in a degree of abundance hitherto unknown; and the late famine was succeeded by the greatest affluence and plenty of all things. But the Britons of those times (if we may believe their own historian Gildas) were as unfit for

\* Gildas Hist. c. 16. 19. 21.

prosperity as adversity. Forgetting their former woes, and regardless of future dangers, they plunged, with the most unthinking wantonness, into intemperance and debauchery of all kinds. However, it was not long before they were awakened from this pleasing dream. For their ancient enemies in the North, having heard of the prodigious plenty which reigned in South Britain, renewed their incursions, and, repeating them for several years, reduced the Britons almost to the same distress from which they had so lately emerged.\*

A.D. 440.

The declaration of the Romans at their last departure, that they were never to return, had been so positive, and the confusions of the empire ever since that time had been so great, that the Britons, in all the late miseries, had not made any application to them for relief. But the fame of the renowned Ætius, præfect of Gaul, affording them a glimmering of hope that they might possibly obtain some assistance from that quarter in their present distress, they sent ambassadors to that general, with letters, in the following mournful strain: "To Ætius, thrice consul, the groans of the Britons. The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea throws us back on the swords of the barbarians; so that we have nothing left us but the wretched choice of being either drowned or butchered." But all their lamentations and entreaties, on this

A.D. 446.  
Britons  
apply to  
the Ro-  
mans for  
assistance  
in vain.

\* Gildæ Hist. c. 16. 19. 21. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 14.

A.D. 446. occasion, were in vain. Ætius might pity, but he could not assist them; being at that time employed in collecting all his forces, to resist the terrible Attila, King of the Hunns, who threatened the total destruction of the Western empire.\*

A.D. 449.  
Britons  
send am-  
bassadors  
to the  
Saxons.

Soon after the Britons had been thus disappointed in their expectations of succours from the Romans, they received a new alarm, which filled them with the greatest consternation. The incursions of the Scots and Picts, however destructive, had hitherto been only transient. As soon as those ravagers had collected a sufficient quantity of booty, they returned with it into their own country, leaving the owners to enjoy the rest in some tranquillity. But a report was now propagated, that these two nations had resolved to invade South Britain with their united forces, to extirpate the nations, and settle in the country. This report, whether true or false, being generally believed, caused the greatest terror and dismay. An assembly of all the British kings, princes, and chieftains was convened, to deliberate what was proper to be done, to prevent so great a danger. Amongst the great number of petty princes which composed this assembly, Vortigern, sovereign of the Silures, was the most considerable. This prince, on account of the extent of his dominions, the number and bravery of his followers, and his own personal accomplishments, seems to have

\* Gildæ Hist. c. 19. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1, c. 15.

acted the part of a kind of universal monarch over the other chiefs. By his authority this assembly was called ; he presided in it, and too much influenced its decisions. Instead of embracing vigorous measures, worthy of so many chieftains, to depend upon their own bravery for their security, the only question was, to whom they should apply for assistance and protection. It was in vain to make any further applications to the Romans ; nor was it easy to find any other nation able and willing to give them the assistance which they wanted. When they were at this loss, Vortigern, in an evil hour, though not perhaps with any ill intention, proposed to make application to the Saxons. That nation abounded in shipping, delighted in war, and equalled, if not exceeded their enemies in ferocity. The Britons had often experienced the bravery of the Saxons to their cost, and therefore thought it good policy to employ it in their defence ; never reflecting that these dangerous protectors might become their enemies, and at last their masters. In the end, the proposal of Vortigern was embraced, and ambassadors appointed to go and invite an army of Saxons into this island, to assist the Britons of the South against their northern neighbours. \* The names of these ambassadors are not preserved in history ; but (if we can depend on the historian of the Saxons) their ad-

A.D. 449.



\* Gildæ Hist. c. 22, 23. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 15.

A.D. 440. dress to that people was in the following humble, or rather abject strain. \*

Speech of  
the British  
ambassadors to the  
Saxons,  
and their  
arrival in  
Britain.

“ Most noble Saxons, the wretched and miserable Britons, worn out by the perpetual incursions of their enemies, having heard of the many glorious victories which you have obtained by your valour, have sent us, their humble suppliants, to implore your assistance and protection. We have a spacious, beautiful, and fertile country, abounding in all things, which we resign to your devotion and command. Formerly we lived in peace and safety under the protection of the Romans; and, next to them, knowing none more brave and powerful than you, we fly for refuge under the wings of your valour. If by your powerful assistance we shall become superior to our enemies, we promise to perform whatever service you shall think fit to impose upon us.”

If the Britons were really capable of making use of such slavish language, they had little reason to complain afterwards of the treachery of the Saxons, or to expect any better treatment from them than they met with. But it is more probable, that this speech, like many others in history, was composed by the historian, than by those to whom it is imputed.

In whatever manner the British ambassadors addressed themselves to the Saxons, they were

\* Witichindus.



unhappily successful in their negociation; and a small army of that nation was immediately sent into Britain, which was afterwards followed by several others. These Saxon armies, instead of protecting the Britons against their enemies, either destroyed, enslaved, or expelled them; and, seating themselves in their room, brought about another great revolution in the state of South Britain; which will be the subject of the Second Book of this work.

A.D. 449.





THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

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BOOK I.

CHAP. II.

THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IN SOUTH BRITAIN, FROM  
THE FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS UNDER  
JULIUS CÆSAR, A. A. C. 55, TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE  
SAXONS, A. D. 449.

SECTION I.

HISTORY OF DRUIDISM.

THERE never was any nation upon earth, whose history is entitled to any degree of attention, <sup>Importance of religion,</sup> which had not some religion. Nor was there ever any religion which had not some influence upon the minds and manners, the actions and characters of those nations by whom it was professed. For these two reasons, the history of their religion must always be an import-

ant and essential part of the history of every nation : as, without some knowledge of this, and of the events immediately relating to it, we cannot form right conceptions of the laws, customs, characters, circumstances, and public transactions of any people.

Ancient  
Britons famous for  
religion.

When the Romans first invaded Britain, under Julius Cæsar, the inhabitants of it were famous, even among foreign nations, for their superior knowledge of the principles, and their great zeal for the rites of their religion. This circumstance we learn from the best authority, the writings of that illustrious and observing general, Julius Cæsar; who informs us, “That such of the Gauls  
“ as were desirous of being thoroughly in-  
“ structed in the principles of their religion  
“ (which was the same with that of the Britons)  
“ usually took a journey into Britain for that  
“ purpose.” \*

Antiquity  
of the reli-  
gion of the  
Britons.

This religion, in the knowledge of which the Britons of that age so much excelled, could justly boast of very high antiquity. The first and purest principles of it at least descended to them, together with their language and many other things, from Gomer the eldest son of Japhet, from whom the Gauls, Britons, and all the other Celtic nations derived their origin.† For it is not to be imagined that this renowned parent of so many nations, who was only the grandson of

\* Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

† Pezron. Antiq. Celt. c. 5. Hotoman. Franc. Gal. c. 2.

Noah, could be unacquainted with the knowledge of the true God, and of the most essential principles of religion ; or that he neglected to communicate this knowledge to his immediate descendants, and they to their posterity from age to age. But unhappily, the method by which this religious knowledge was handed down from Gomer to his numerous posterity in succeeding ages, was not well calculated to preserve it pure and uncorrupted. This was by tradition, which, however limpid it may be near its fountain-head, is like other streams, very apt to swell and become turbid in its progress. Accordingly we find, that at the period where this history begins, the religion of the ancient Britons had degenerated into an absurd, wicked, and cruel superstition.

In delineating this very corrupt system of religion, it will be sufficient to give a brief account—of its priests, who taught its principles, and performed its sacred rites—of the religious principles which they taught—of the deities whom they worshipped—of the various acts of worship which they paid to these deities, with their times, places, and other circumstances—and finally, of the extinction of these priests, and of their religion, to make way for a more pure and heavenly institution.

The priests who taught the principles, and performed the offices of religion among the ancient

Method of delineating this religion.

British priests, their dignity.



Britons were called Druids. \*\* This class of men, for many ages, enjoyed the highest honours, and the greatest privileges, in this island and in several other countries. “There are “only two orders of men,” says Cæsar, speaking of the Gauls, and it was the same in Britain, “who are in any high degree of honour and “esteem; these are the Druids and the nobles.” †† To say nothing in this place of their prodigious influence in civil affairs, they had the supreme and sole direction of every thing relating to religion. “No sacred rite was “ever performed without a Druid; by them, “as being the favourites of the Gods, and “depositories of their counsels, the people “offered all their sacrifices, thanksgivings, “and prayers; and were perfectly submissive “and obedient to their commands. Nay, so “great was the veneration in which they were “held, that when two hostile armies, inflamed

\*\* The name of these famous priests is derived by some writers from the Teutonic word *Druthin*, a servant of truth: \* by others from the Saxon word *Dry*, a magician: † by others from the Greek word *δρυς*, an oak; ‡ and by others, with the greatest probability, from the Celtic or British word *Derw*, which also signifies an oak; § for which the Druids had a most superstitious veneration. This last derivation is much countenanced by a passage in *Diodorus Siculus*, who, speaking of the philosophers and priests of Gaul, the same with our Druids, says they were called *Saronidæ*, from *Σαρων*, the Greek name of an oak. ||

†† Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 13.

\* Macpherson's *Dissertations*, p. 541.

† Spelman. *Gloss.*

‡ Plin. l. 16. c. 44.

§ Dickenson *Delphi. Phœnicizautes*, p. 188.

|| Diod. Sicul. l. 5.

“with warlike rage, with swords drawn, and  
 “spears extended, were on the point of engag-  
 “ing in battle; at their intervention, they  
 “sheathed their swords, and became calm and  
 “peaceful.” \* The persons of the Druids were  
 held sacred and inviolable; they were exempted  
 from all taxes and military services; and, in a  
 word, they enjoyed so many immunities and  
 distinctions, that princes were ambitious of be-  
 ing admitted into their society. †

The Druids were not all of equal rank and Arch-  
druid.  
 dignity. Cæsar says that some of them were  
 more eminent than others, and that the whole  
 order was subject to one supreme head or Arch-  
 druid. This high-priest was elected from amongst  
 the most eminent Druids, by a plurality of votes.  
 But this high station was attended with so much  
 power and riches, with so many honours and  
 privileges of various kinds, that it was an object  
 of great ambition, and the election of one to fill  
 it sometimes occasioned a civil war. ‡

The Druids were also divided into three dif- Three  
classes of  
Druids.  
 ferent classes, who applied to different branches  
 of learning, and performed different parts in the  
 offices of religion. These three classes were, the  
 Bards, the Euhages or Vates, and Druids: which  
 last name was frequently given to the whole

\* Dio. Sicul. l. 5. § 31. p. 354. Strabo, l. 4. p. 197.

† Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 13. Cicero de Divinatione, l. 1.  
 Mela, l. 3. c. 2.

‡ Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 13.

order, though it was also sometimes appropriated to a particular class. \*

1st class. The Bards were the heroic, historical, and genealogical poets of Germany, Gaul, and Britain. They did not properly belong to the priestly order, nor had they any immediate concern with the offices of religion. On the contrary, they carefully abstained from introducing any thing of a religious nature into their poems; and therefore they will fall more naturally under our consideration in another place. †

2d class. Those of the second class were called by the Greeks, *οὐατίς*; by the Romans, Vates; and by the Gauls and Britons, Fuids. They were unquestionably of the priesthood, and performed an important part in the public offices of religion; by composing hymns in honour of the Gods, which they sung to the music of their harps and other instruments, at the sacred solemnities. They were, in a word, the sacred musicians, the religious poets, and pretended prophets of all the Celtic nations, who believed them to be divinely inspired in their poetical compositions, and also blessed with revelations from Heaven, concerning the nature of things, the will of the Gods, and future events. The Latin poets were not unacquainted with this distinction between the mere secular Bard or Poet and the divine Vates; or of the great superiority of the latter above the

\* Diod. Sicul. l. 5. Strabo, l. 4. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 15.

† See chap. 5th, of Poetry.

former. This appears from the verses quoted below ; in which Lycidas assumes the name of Poet as his right, but declines the more honourable title of Vates, which was given him by the shepherds, as too high a compliment. \* With these religious poets and pretended prophets, both Gaul and Britain very much abounded, in the times we are now considering, as we learn from the concurrent testimonies of Strabo, Diodorus, and Marcellinus : † and a modern writer, of great authority in these matters, assures us, that there are some families still subsisting, both in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, which bear their name, and are probably descended from some of these once celebrated Faids. ‡

The Druids, who composed the third, or to <sup>3d class,</sup> speak more properly, the second class of the ancient British priesthood, were by far the most numerous, and therefore the whole order was commonly called by that name. They performed all the offices of religion, except that part which we have just now observed was allotted to the preceding class ; and it is even probable, that, in the absence of the Faids, they performed that part also, and assisted in it when they were present.

\* . . . . . et me fecere poetam

Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina ; me quoque dicunt

Vatem pastores, sed non ego credulus illis.

Virgil. Eclog. 9. ver. 32.

† Strabo, l. 4. Diod. Sicul. l. 5. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 15.

‡ Macpherson's Dissertations, p. 205.

Manner of  
living.

Many of the Druids seem to have lived a kind of collegiate or monastic life, united together in fraternities, as Marcellinus expresses it. The service of each temple required a considerable number of them, and all these lived together near the temple where they served. The Archdruid of Britain is thought to have had his ordinary residence in the isle of Anglesey, where he lived in great splendour and magnificence for those times, surrounded by a great number of the most eminent persons of his order. In this isle, it is pretended, the vestiges of the Archdruid's palaces, and of the houses of the other Druids who attended him, are still visible.\* But not a few of the Druids led a more secular and public way of life, in the courts of princes and families of great men, to perform the duties of their function. For no sacred rite or act of religion could be performed without a Druid, either in temples or in private houses. Nor does it seem improbable, that some of these ancient priests retired from the world, and from the societies of their brethren, and lived as hermits, in order to acquire a greater reputation of sanctity. In the most unfrequented places of some of the western islands of Scotland, there are still remaining the foundations of small circular houses, capable of containing only one person, which are called by the people of the country Druids' houses.† None

\* Rowland's *Mona Antiq.* p. 83, &c. &c.

† Martin's *Description of the Western Isles*, p. 154.



of these ways of life seem to be very suitable to a married state, and it is therefore probable that the far greatest part of the Druids lived in celibacy, and were waited upon by a set of female devotees, who will presently be described.

It is impossible, at this distance of time, to Revenues. discover particularly what were the revenues of the ancient British Druids. In general, we may conclude that they were as great as the people could afford, considering the superstitious veneration which they entertained for their persons, and the implicit obedience which they paid to their dictates. It is never difficult for those who have once obtained the entire direction of men's consciences, to secure to themselves a considerable portion of their possessions. The Druids seem to have had the superiority, if not the entire property, of certain islands on the coast both of England and Scotland, as Anglesey, Man, Harris, &c.; and it is highly probable that they had also territories in different parts of the Continent, near their several temples. There can be no doubt, that a great part of the offerings which were brought to their sacred places, and presented to their Gods, fell to their share. These offerings were very frequent, and on some occasions very great. It was a common practice with the nations of Gaul and Britain, to dedicate all the cattle, and other spoils which they had taken in war, to that deity by whose assistance they imagined they had gained the victory.\*

\* Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. Athen. l. 4.

Of these devoted spoils the priests were at least the administrators, if not the proprietors. They were frequently consulted, both by states and private persons, about the success of intended enterprises, and other future events; and were well rewarded for the good fortune which they promised, and the secrets of futurity which they pretended to reveal.\* To say nothing here of the profits which they derived from the administration of justice, the practice of physic, and teaching the sciences (which were all in their hands), they certainly received great emoluments from those whom they instructed in the principles, and initiated into the mysteries of their theology; especially from such of them as were of high rank, and came from foreign countries. Besides this (if we can depend upon a tradition mentioned by several writers), there were certain annual dues (we know not what they were) exacted from every family by the priests of that temple within whose district the family dwelt; and these artful priests had invented a most effectual method to secure the punctual payment of these dues. All these families were obliged (under the dreadful penalties of excommunication) to extinguish their fires on the last evening of October, and to attend at the temple with their annual payment; and the first day of November to receive some of the sacred fire from the altar, to rekindle those in their houses. By this con-

\* *Ælian. Var. Histor. l. 2. c. 51.*

trivance, they were obliged to pay, or to be deprived of the use of fire, at the approach of winter, when the want of it would be most sensibly felt. If any of their friends or neighbours took pity on the delinquents, and supplied them with fire, or even conversed with them, they were laid under the same terrible sentence of excommunication, by which they were not only excluded from all the sacred solemnities, but from all the sweets of society, and all the benefits of law and justice.\* From these sources of wealth which we have mentioned (and perhaps they had others to us unknown), we have reason to think, that the British Druids were the most opulent, as well as the most respected body of men in their country, in the times in which they flourished.

Nothing can be affirmed with certainty, concerning the precise number of the British Druids: though, in general, we have reason to believe that they were very numerous. Both the Gauls and Britons of these times were much addicted to superstition: and among a superstitious people there will always be many priests. Besides this, they entertained an opinion, as we are told by Strabo, which was highly favourable to the increase of the priestly order. They were fully persuaded, that the greater number of Druids they had in their country, they would obtain the more plentiful harvests, and the greater abun-

Numbers.

\* Toland's Hist. of the Druids, p. 71, 72. Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

dance of all things. \* Nay, we are directly informed by Cæsar, that great numbers of people, allured by the honours and privileges which they enjoyed, embraced the discipline of the Druids of their own accord, and that many more were dedicated to it by their parents. † Upon the whole, therefore, we shall probably not be very much mistaken, if we suppose that the British Druids bore as great a proportion in number to the rest of the people, as the clergy in Popish

Druidesses.

Besides the Druids, the Britons had also Druidesses, who assisted in the offices, and shared in the honours and emoluments of the priesthood. When Suetonius invaded the island of Anglesey, his soldiers were struck with terror at the strange appearance of a great number of these consecrated females, who ran up and down among the ranks of the British army, like enraged furies, with their hair dishevelled, and flaming torches in their hands, imprecating the wrath of Heaven on the invaders of their country. ‡ The Druidesses of Gaul and Britain are said to have been divided into three ranks or classes. Those of the first class had vowed perpetual virginity, and lived together in sisterhoods, very much sequestered from the world. They were great pretenders to divination, prophecy, and miracles; were highly admired by the people, who con-

\* Strabo, l. 4.

† Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

‡ Tacit. Annal. l. 14.

sulted them on all important occasions as infallible oracles, and gave them the honourable appellation of Senæ, *i. e.* venerable women. Mela gives a curious description of one of these Druidical nunneries. It was situated in an island in the British sea, and contained nine of these venerable vestals, who pretended that they could raise storms and tempests by their incantations; could cure the most incurable diseases; could transform themselves into all kinds of animals; and foresee future events. But it seems they were not very forward in publishing the things which they foresaw, but chose to make some advantage of so valuable a gift. For, it is added, they disclosed the things which they had discovered, to none but those who came into their island on set purpose to consult their oracle; \* and none of these, we may suppose, would come empty-handed. The second class consisted of certain female devotees, who were indeed married, but spent the far greatest part of their time in the company of the Druids, and in the offices of religion; and conversed only occasionally with their husbands; who perhaps thought themselves very happy in having such pious wives. The third class of Druidesses was the lowest, and consisted of such as performed the most servile offices about the temples, the sacrifices, and the persons of the Druids. †

\* Mela. l. 3. c. 2.

† Gruttes, p. 62. Relig. de Gaul. l. 1. c. 27.



Such were the ministers and teachers of religion among the ancient Britons. It is now time to inquire, what were the religious principles and opinions which they taught.

Twofold  
doctrine  
of the  
Druids.

The Druids, as well as the Gymnosophists of India, the Magi of Persia, the Chaldeans of Assyria, and all the other priests of antiquity, had two sets of religious doctrines and opinions, which were very different from one another. The one of these systems they communicated only to the initiated, who were admitted into their own order, and at their admission were solemnly sworn to keep that system of doctrines a profound secret from all the rest of mankind.\* Besides this, they took several other precautions to prevent these secret doctrines from transpiring. They taught their disciples, as we are told by Mela, in the most private places, such as caves of the earth, or the deepest recesses of the thickest forests, that they might not be overheard by any who were not initiated.† They never committed any of these doctrines to writing, for fear they should thereby become public.‡ Nay, so jealous were some orders of these ancient priests on this head, that they made it an inviolable rule never to communicate any of these secret doctrines to women, lest they should blab them.§ The other system of religious doctrines and opinions

\* Mela, l. 3. c. 2. Diogen. Laert. in Proem.

† Mela, l. 3. c. 2. Lucan. l. 1.

‡ Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 13.

§ Strabo, l. 15.

was made public, being adapted to the capacities and superstitious humours of the people, and calculated to promote the honour and opulence of the priesthood. —

It cannot be expected that we should be able to give a minute detail of the secret doctrines of the Druids. The Greek and Roman writers, from whom alone we can receive information, were not perfectly acquainted with them, and therefore they have left us only some general hints, and probable conjectures about them, with which we must be contented. The secret doctrines of our Druids were much the same with those of the Gymnosophists and Brachmans of India, the Magi of Persia, the Chaldeans of Assyria, the priests of Egypt, and of all the other priests of antiquity. All these are frequently joined together by ancient authors, as entertaining the same opinions in religion and philosophy ; which might be easily confirmed by an induction of particulars.\* The truth is, there is hardly any thing more surprising in the history of mankind, than the similitude, or rather identity, of the opinions, institutions, and manners of all these orders of ancient priests, though they lived under such different climates, and at so great a distance from one another, without intercourse or communication. This amounts to a demonstration, that all these opinions and institutions flowed originally from one fountain ;

Secret  
doctrines  
of the  
Druids.

\* Mela, Suabo, Diod. Sicul. Diegen. Laert. &c.

the instructions which the sons of Noah gave to their immediate descendants, and they to their posterity ; many of which were carefully preserved and handed down through a long succession of ages, by an order of men in every nation set apart for that purpose. Though these streams of religious knowledge therefore flowed through different channels, into very distant countries, yet they long retained a strong tincture of their original fountain. The secret doctrines of the Druids, and of all these different orders of priests, were more agreeable to primitive tradition and right reason, than their public doctrines ; as they were not under any temptation, in their private schools, to conceal or disguise the truth. It is not improbable that they still retained, in secret, the great doctrine of One God, the creator and governor of the universe.\* This, which was originally the belief of all the orders of priests which we have mentioned, was retained by some of them long after the period we are now considering, and might therefore be known to the Druids at this period. This is one of the doctrines which the Brachmans of India are sworn to keep secret : “ That there is one God, the creator of heaven and earth. ” † Cæsar acquaints us, that they taught their disciples many things about the nature and perfections of God. ‡ Some writers

\* Augustin. de civitate Dei, l. 8. c. 9.

† Francisc. Saver. Epist. de Brachman.

‡ Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

are of opinion, and have taken much learned pains to prove, that our Druids, as well as the other orders of ancient priests, taught their disciples many things concerning the creation of the world—the formation of man—his primitive innocence and felicity—and his fall into guilt and misery—the creation of angels—their rebellion and expulsion out of Heaven—the universal deluge—and the final destruction of this world by fire : and that their doctrines on all these subjects were not very different from those which are contained in the writings of Moses, and other parts of Scripture. \* There is abundant evidence that the Druids taught the doctrine of the immortality of the souls of men ; and Mela tells us, that this was one of their secret doctrines which they were permitted to publish for political rather than religious reasons. “ There is one thing which they teach their disciples, which hath been made known to the common people, in order to render them more brave and fearless ; viz. That souls are immortal, and that there is another life after the present.” † Cæsar and Diodorus say, that the Druids taught the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls into other bodies. ‡ This was perhaps their public doctrine on this subject, as being most level to the gross conceptions of the vulgar. But others represent them

\* Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 1. c. 52.

† Mela, l. 5. c. 11.

‡ Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15. Diod. Sicul. l. 5.

as teaching, that the soul after death ascended into some higher orb, and enjoyed a more sublime felicity. This was probably their private doctrine, and real sentiments. \*

But however agreeable to truth and reason the secret doctrine of the Druids might be, they were of no benefit to the bulk of mankind, from whom they were carefully concealed. For these artful priests, for their own mercenary ends, had embraced a maxim, which hath unhappily survived them, that ignorance was the mother of devotion, and that the common people were incapable of comprehending rational principles, or of being influenced by rational motives ; and that they were therefore to be fed with the coarser food of superstitious fables. This is the reason assigned by Strabo for the fabulous theology of the ancients. “ It is not possible to bring women, and  
“ the common herd of mankind, to religion,  
“ piety, and virtue, by the pure and simple  
“ dictates of reason. It is necessary to call in  
“ the aids of superstition, which must be nourished by fables and portents of various kinds.  
“ With this view, therefore, were all the fables  
“ of ancient theology invented, to awaken superstitious terrors in the minds of the ignorant multitude.” † As the Druids had the same ends in view with the other priests of antiquity, it is highly probable that their public

\* Ammian. Marecl. l. 15. Lucan. l. 1. v. 455, &c.

† Strabo, l. 1.



theology was of the same complexion with theirs; consisting of a thousand mythological fables, concerning the genealogies, attributes, offices, and actions of their gods; the various superstitious methods of appeasing their anger, gaining their favour, and discovering their will. This farrago of fables was couched in verse, full of figures and metaphors, and was delivered by the Druids from little eminences (of which there are many still remaining) to the surrounding multitudes.\* With this fabulous divinity, these poetical declaimers intermixed moral precepts, for the regulation of the lives and manners of their hearers; and were peculiarly warm in exhorting them to abstain from doing any hurt or injury to one another, and to fight valiantly in defence of their country.† These pathetic declamations are said to have made great impression on the minds of the people, inspiring them with a supreme veneration for their Gods, an ardent love to their country, an undaunted courage, and sovereign contempt of death.‡ The secret and public theology of the Druids, together with their system of morals and philosophy, had swelled to such an enormous size, in the beginning of this period, that their disciples employed no less than twenty years in making themselves masters of all their different branches, and in

\* Rowland's *Mona Antiq.*

† *Id. ibid.* p. 255. Diogen. Laert. in *Proem.*

‡ Lucan. l. 1. v. 460, &c. Cæsar, de *Bel. Gal.* l. 6. c. 15.

getting by heart that infinite multitude of verses in which they were contained. \*

The Gods  
of the an-  
cient Bri-  
tons.

How long the several nations who descended from Gomer, the son of Japhet, and in particular, the ancient Gauls and Britons, continued to worship only the one living and true God, and at what time, or by what means, the adoration of a plurality of Gods was introduced amongst them, it is impossible for us to discover with any certainty ; though we have sufficient evidence that this change had taken place before the beginning of our present period. † It is highly probable that this fatal innovation was introduced by slow degrees, proceeded from, and was promoted by, the three following causes. The different names and attributes of the true God were mistaken for, and adored as, so many different divinities. The sun, moon, and stars, the most striking and illustrious objects in nature, were at first viewed with great veneration, as the most glorious works and lively emblems of the Deity, and, by degrees, came to be adored as Gods. Great and mighty princes, who had been the objects of universal admiration during their lives, became the objects of adoration after their deaths. The Britons had Gods of all these different kinds, as will appear from the following brief detail.

\* *Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15. Mela, l. 3. c. 2.*

† *Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.*

The Supreme Being was worshipped by the <sup>Hesus.</sup> Gauls and Britons under the name of Hesus, a word expressive of his attribute of Omnipotence, as Hizzuz is in the Hebrew. \* But when the worship of a plurality of Gods was introduced, Hesus was adored only as a particular divinity, who by his great power presided over war and armies, and was the same with Mars. † As the Germans, Gauls and Britons, were much addicted to war, they were great worshippers of Hesus, when become a particular divinity, from whom they expected victory; and they paid their court to him by such cruel and bloody rites, as could be acceptable only to a being who delighted in the destruction of mankind. ‡

Teutates was another name or attribute of the <sup>Teutates.</sup> Supreme Being, which, in these times of ignorance and idolatry, was worshipped by the Gauls and Britons as a particular divinity. It is evidently compounded of the two British words Deu-Tatt, which signify God the parent or creator, a name properly due only to the one true God, § who was originally intended by that name. But when these nations sunk into idolatry, they degraded Teutates into the sovereign of the infernal world; the same with the

\* Psal. 24. v. 8.

† Boxhorn. Orig. Gal. c. 1. p. 11.

‡ Caesar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 17. Lucan. l. 1. v. 445.

§ Et quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro

Teutates: horrensque feris altaribus Hesus.

Lucan. l. 1. ver. 445.

Dis and Pluto of the Greeks and Romans (or, as others think, with Mercury); and worshipped him in such a manner as could be agreeable to none but an infernal power. \*

Taranis.

So tremendous and awful is the sound of thunder that all nations seem to have agreed in believing it to be the voice of the Supreme Being; and as such it was no doubt considered by the Gauls and Britons, as well as by other nations, while they continued to worship only one God.† But when they began to multiply their Gods, Taranis, so called from Taran, thunder, became one of their particular divinities, and was worshipped also by very inhuman rites.

The Sun  
under various  
names.

The Sun seems to have been both the most ancient and most universal object of idolatrous worship; insomuch, that perhaps there never was any nation of idolaters which did not pay some homage to this glorious luminary. He was worshipped by the ancient Britons with great devotion, in many places, under the various names of Bel, Belinus, Belatucardos, Apollo, Grannius, &c. all which names in their language were expressive of the nature and properties of

\* Baxter Gloss. Brit. p. 227. Caesar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 18. Dionys. Halicar. l. 1. p. 16.

† Et Taranis Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ.

Lucan. l. 1. v. 446.

Job, chap. 40. v. 9. Psalm 29. 5, 4, 5.

that visible fountain of light and heat.\* To this illustrious object of idolatrous worship, those famous circles of stones, of which there are not a few still remaining, seem to have been chiefly dedicated, where the Druids kept the sacred fire, the symbol of this divinity, and from whence, as being situated on eminences, they had a full view of the heavenly bodies.

As the Moon appeared next in lustre and utility <sup>The Moon.</sup> to the Sun, there can be no doubt that this radiant queen of heaven obtained a very early and very large share in the idolatrous veneration of mankind. What Diodorus says of the ancient inhabitants of Egypt, may perhaps be said with equal truth of all other idolatrous veneration. “ When they took a view of the universe, and “ contemplated the nature of all things, they “ imagined that the Sun and Moon were the “ two first and greatest Gods.”† The Moon, as we are told by Cæsar, ‡ was the chief divinity of the ancient Germans, out of gratitude, it is probable, for the favours which they received from her lunar majesty, in their nocturnal and predatory expeditions; nor did they think it proper to fight, or engage in any important enterprise, while this their protectress was in a state of obscurity. § The Gauls and Britons seem to have paid the same kind of worship to the

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 35. Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 206. 261. M<sup>c</sup>Pherson's Dissert. p. 313.

† Diod. Sicul. l. 1.

‡ Cæsar, l. 6. c. 21.

§ Id. ibid. l. 1.



Moon as to the Sun ; and it hath been observed, that the circular temples dedicated to these two luminaries were of the same construction, and commonly contiguous. \*

Gods of  
Britain  
who had  
been men.

But a great number of the Gods of Gaul and Britain, as well as of Greece and Rome, had been men, victorious princes, wise legislators, inventors of useful arts, &c. who had been deified, by the admiration and gratitude of those nations which had lost the knowledge of one infinitely perfect Being, who was alone entitled to their supreme admiration and gratitude. † It is even certain, that those deified mortals who were adored by the Gauls and Britons were in general the very same persons who were worshipped by the Greeks and Romans. These were Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, and the other princes and princesses of the royal family of the Titans; who reigned with so much lustre, both in Asia and Europe, in the patriarchal ages. ‡ The only question is, whether the Gauls and Britons, and other Celtic nations, borrowed their Gods of this class from the Greeks and Romans, or these last borrowed theirs from them. To convince us that the Celtic Gods were the originals, and those of the Greeks and Romans the copies, it is sufficient to observe, that all those deified princes belonged to the Celtæ by their

\* Martin's Description of the Western Isles, p. 365.

† Cicero de Natura Deorum, l. 1. Diod. Sicul. l. 5. Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 17.

‡ Pezron Antiq. Celt. l. 1. c. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

birth, and were sovereigns of the Celtic tribes, who peopled Gaul and Britain—that all their names were significant in the Celtic language, and expressive of their several characters—and that the Gauls and Britons, and the other nations who were called Barbarians, were much more tenacious of the opinions and customs of their ancestors, than the Greeks and Romans, who discovered a great propensity to adopt the Gods and religious ceremonies of other nations.\* Of these deified princes who were worshipped by all the Celtic nations, and by many others, the following were the most illustrious :

Saturn was one of the greatest of the Titan Saturn. princes, and the first of that family who wore a crown, and assumed the title of King, his ancestors having contented themselves with that of chieftains.† His name in the Celtic language signifies Martial, or Warlike, a name to which he was well entitled, having dethroned his father Uranus, subdued his brother Titan, and extended his empire over the greatest part of Europe.‡ Though Cæsar doth not name Saturn among the Gods of Gaul and Britain, yet there is sufficient evidence that he was known and worshipped in these parts. Cicero says, that he was worshipped chiefly in the West;§ and Dion. Halicarnassus directly affirms, that he was adored by all the Celtic nations who inhabited the west of

|| Dionys. Halicar. l. 7. p. 474.

† Tertul. de Corona, p. 17.

‡ Pezron Antiq. Celt. l. 1. c. 10.

§ Cicero de Natura Deorum, l. 3.

Europe.\* Saturn was represented as a cruel and bloody, as well as a martial prince; and his deluded worshippers seemed to have imagined that he still retained these odious qualities in his deified state; for they endeavoured to gain his favour by human victims. †

Jupiter.

Jupiter, the youngest son of Saturn, was still a greater and more renowned prince than his father, whom he dethroned. He so far eclipsed his two elder brothers, Neptune and Pluto, that they acted only as his vicegerents in the government of certain provinces of his prodigious empire. The true name of this illustrious prince was Jow, which in the Celtic language signifies young, he being the youngest son of Saturn, and having performed very great exploits while he was in the flower of his youth. ‡ To this name the Latins afterwards added the word Pater (father), but still retained the true name in all the other cases but the nominative. Jow or Jupiter seems to have been a prince of great personal accomplishments, though in some particulars not of very strict morals; and as he reigned in prodigious splendour over an immense empire, we need not wonder that he was extravagantly flattered during his life, and deified (as was become the custom) after his death. The same high strains of adulation were addressed to him in his deified state; and at length he came to be

\* Dion. Halicar. l. 1. c. 4.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Pezron *Antiq. Cel.* l. 1. c. 11, 12.

considered by Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Britons, and many other nations, as the greatest of all Gods, to whom they impiously ascribed every divine perfection, as will appear from the verses quoted below. \*

Mercury was the favourite son of Jupiter by his cousin Maia, and the most accomplished prince of all the Titan race. He was so much beloved by his father Jupiter, that he gave him the government of the West of Europe in his own lifetime. His name in the Celtic tongue was compounded of the two words, *Mer*, which signifies merchandise, and *Wr*, a man; a name which was justly conferred upon him, on account of his promoting commerce, as well as learning, eloquence, and all the arts, in his dominions. It was on these accounts also, that in his deified state he was esteemed the God of merchants, orators, and artists: and as thieves will sometimes thrust themselves into good company, they too claimed his protection. † The Gauls (and probably the Britons) having enjoyed the benefit of the wise and good government of this prince,

- \* *Primus cunctorum est et Jupiter ultimus idem :*  
*Jupiter et caput et medium est : sunt ex Jove cuncta.*  
*Jupiter est terræ basis, et stellantis Olympi.*  
*Jupiter et mas est, estque idem nympa perennis.*  
*Spiritus est cunctis, validusque est Jupiter ignis.*  
*Jupiter est pelagi radix : est lunaque solque.*  
*Cunctorum rex est, princepsque et originis auctor.*  
*Namque sinu occultans, dulces in luminis auras*  
*Cuncta tulit : sacro versans sub pectore curas.*

Apuleius de Mundo, l. 1.

† *Pezron Antiq. Celt. l. 1. c. 14.*

their esteem and gratitude made them regard him as their chief God. \*

Many  
other  
Gods,  
Goddesses,  
&c.

Besides these, there is sufficient evidence that our unhappy ancestors, in those times of ignorance, had many other imaginary Gods, who had been real men, to whom they paid religious homage ; but there seems to be little necessity for making such a detail as this complete.† They worshipped also several female divinities or Goddesses ; as Andraste, who is supposed to have been the same with Venus or Diana ; Onvana, Minerva, Ceres, Proserpine, &c. &c.‡ Nay, into such an abyss of superstition and idolatry were they sunk, that, according to Gildas, they had a greater number of Gods than the Egyptians ; and there was hardly a river, lake, mountain, or wood, which was not supposed to have some divinities or genii residing in them. || Such were the unworthy objects to whom the benighted Britons paid religious worship and adoration of various kinds ; some of which we shall now proceed to enumerate.

Worship  
of four  
kinds.

The great ends which the ancient Britons had in view in the worship which they paid to their Gods, seem to have been these four—To express their admiration of their perfections, and gratitude for their favours—to obtain from them such

\* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 17:

† See *Sanctis Brit. Antiq.* cap. 9.

‡ *Id. ibid.* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

|| *Historia Gildæ*, c. 2. Pelloutier *Hist. Celt.* v. 2. p. 36 to 41, &c.  
&c.



things as they wanted and desired—to appease their anger, and engage their love—and to discover their designs and counsels with regard to future events. In consequence of this, their acts of religious worship were also of four kinds, and consisted of—songs of praise and thanksgiving—prayers and supplications—offerings and sacrifices—and the various rights of augury and divination.

Piety, it hath been imagined by some writers, was the parent of poetry : and the first poems were hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Supreme Being. Hymns of praise and thanksgiving. However this may be, it is very certain that such hymns were of the highest antiquity ; and the most ancient poetical compositions now extant are of that kind. \* Nor was the use of such sacred hymns less universal than it was ancient, and they have always made a part of the religious worship of every nation. For which reasons we may conclude in general, that such songs of praise and thanksgiving, expressive of their admiration, love, and gratitude to their Gods, were used by the ancient Britons (who were a very poetical people) in their religious solemnities. If we could be certain that the famous Hyperborean island described by Diodorus Siculus was Britain, or any of the British isles, we should then have a direct proof, that the religion of the ancient Britons consisted chiefly in singing hymns to Apollo, or the Sun,

\* Deuteronomy, chap. 32. Judges, chap. 5.

accompanied with the music of various instruments.\* “Hecataeus and some other ancient writers report, that there is an island about the bigness of Sicily, situated in the ocean, opposite to the northern coast of Celtica (Gaul), inhabited by a people called Hyperboreans, because they are beyond the north wind. The climate is excellent, and the soil is fertile, yielding double crops. The inhabitants are great worshippers of Apollo (the Sun), to whom they sing many hymns. To this God they have consecrated a large territory, in the midst of which they have a magnificent round temple, replenished with the richest offerings. Their very city is dedicated to him, and is full of musicians and players on various instruments, who every day celebrate his benefits and perfections.” Besides this, the Britons and other nations had another reason for employing songs and musical instruments in great numbers, in their religious worship. This was to drown the cries of those human victims which they offered in sacrifice to their Gods.\* There was, as we have already seen, a particular class of the priesthood appointed to compose those sacred hymns, and to perform the musical part of worship; though it is not improbable that, on some occasions, all the Druids, and perhaps all the people present, joined in these songs. The hymns composed by the Eubates or Faids, and

\* Diod. Sicul. l. 11. c. 29.

† Plutarch. de Superstitione.

sung at their sacred solemnities, no doubt made a part of that poetical system of divinity, in which the Druids instructed their disciples; but as they were never committed to writing, they are now lost.

As it hath always been one end of religious worship to obtain certain favours from the objects of it; so prayers and supplications for these favours have always made a part of the religious worship of all nations, and in particular of that of the ancient Britons. When in danger, they implored the protection of their Gods; prayers were intermixed with their praises, accompanied their sacrifices, and attended every act of their religion. \* It seems, indeed, to have been the constant invariable practice of all nations, the Jews not excepted, whenever they presented any offerings or sacrifices to their Gods, to put up prayers to them to be propitious to the persons by whom, and for whom the offerings or sacrifices were presented; and to grant them such particular favours as they desired. These prayers were commonly put up by a priest appointed for that purpose, with his hand upon the head of the victim, immediately before it was killed. † Pliny acquaints us with the substance of one of these prayers, which was usually made by a Druid at one of their most solemn sacrifices. “ Which  
 “ done, they begin to offer their sacrifices, and

Prayers  
and suppli-  
cations.

\* Dio. Cas. 1. 62.

† Ovid. Met. 1. 7. v. 245, &c. Virg. Æneid. 1. 6. v. 248, &c. Levit. chap. 1 v. 4.—chap. 16. v. 21.

“to pray to God, to give a blessing with his own gift to them that were honoured with it.” \* When we consider the poetical genius of the ancient Britons, as well as the practice of other nations of antiquity, we have some reason to think, that their prayers, as well as praises, were in verse, and made part of their poetical system of divinity. †

*Offerings.* Mankind having found, by experience, the great efficacy of gifts and presents in appeasing the anger, and gaining the favour of their fellow-creatures, began to think that they might probably make the same impressions on the objects of their religious worship; and employed them to that purpose. ‡ Offerings of various kinds constituted an important part of the religion of the ancient Britons, and of many other nations. These offerings were of different kinds and degrees of value, according to the different circumstances of those who presented them; and consisted generally of the most useful and excellent things which they could procure, and which they were taught would be most agreeable to the Gods. || This was a mode of worship which the Druids very much encouraged; and their sacred places were crowded with those pious gifts, expressive of the gratitude of the donors for favours which they had already received, or of their

\* Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 44.

† Exorant magnos carmina sæpe Deos. Ovid. Trist. l. 11.

‡ Munera crede mihi placeant hominesque Deosque.

|| Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 16. c. 44.

desires of obtaining others ; and not a few of these offerings were in consequence of vows which had been made in a time of trouble. When armies returned from a successful campaign, they commonly offered the most precious of their spoils to some God to whom they imagined themselves indebted for their success. These spoils were piled up in heaps in their consecrated groves, or even by the side of some hallowed lake ; and were esteemed so sacred, that they were seldom or never violated. \*

Mankind, in all ages, and in every country, Sacrifices. have betrayed a consciousness of guilt, and dread of punishment from superior beings, on that account. In consequence of this, they have employed various means to expiate the guilt of which they were conscious, and to escape the punishments of which they were afraid. The means which have been most universally employed by mankind for these ends, were sacrifices of living creatures to their offended Gods ; which constituted a very essential part of the religion of the ancient Britons, and of almost all other ancient nations. The animals which were sacrificed by them, as well as by other nations, were such as they used for their own food ; which, being very palatable and nourishing to themselves, they imagined they would be no less agreeable to their Gods. These victims were examined by the Druids with great care, to see

\* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 16.



that they were the most perfect and beautiful in their several kinds; after which they were killed, with various ceremonies, by priests appointed for that purpose. On some occasions, the victims were consumed entirely by fire upon the altar; but more commonly they were divided into three parts, one of which was consumed upon the altar, another fell to the share of the priest who officiated; and on the third, the person who brought the sacrifice feasted with his friends. \*

Human  
victims.

It had been well, if our British ancestors had confined themselves to the sacrificing of oxen, sheep, goats, and other animals; but we have undoubted evidence, that they proceeded to the most horrid lengths of cruelty in their superstition, and offered human victims to their Gods. It had unhappily become an article in the druidical creed, “That nothing but the life of man  
“ could atone for the life of man.” In consequence of this maxim, their altars streamed with human blood, and great numbers of wretched men fell a sacrifice to their barbarous superstition. On some great occasions, they formed a huge colossal figure of a man, of osier twigs, and having filled it with men, and surrounded it with hay and other combustible materials, they set fire to the pile, and reduced it, with all the miserable creatures included in it, to ashes.† For this abominable purpose, indeed, they are said to

\* Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 1. c. 55.

† Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 16. Strabo, l. 4.

have preferred such as had been guilty of theft, robbery, and other crimes, as most acceptable to their Gods ; but when there was a scarcity of criminals, they made no scruple to supply their place with innocent persons. These dreadful sacrifices were offered by the Druids for the public at the eve of a dangerous war, or in a time of any national calamity ; and for particular persons of high rank, when they were afflicted with any dangerous disease. By such acts of cruelty did the ancient Britons endeavour to avert the displeasure, and gain the favour of their Gods. But that we may not on this account entertain a more unfavourable opinion of their manners and dispositions than we ought, or be led to think them greater barbarians than they were, it is but justice to observe, that many of the most polite and learned nations in the heathen world, as the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans, were guilty of the same superstitious barbarities.\* This observation is not made to diminish our horror at such savage and sanguinary superstitions, for that cannot be too great ; but to prevent us from imagining that our British ancestors were naturally more cruel, or more stupid, than other nations ; and to show us to what deplorable excesses the most humane and intelligent people upon earth are capable of proceeding, when they are left to themselves, and are destitute of the light of Revelation.

\* Euseb. de Laud. Constant. l. 1. c. 7. Lactant. l. 1. c. 21. Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 1. c. 55.

Divina-  
tion.

It seems to have been one article in the creed of the ancient Britons, and of all the other nations of antiquity, that the Gods whom they worshipped had the government of the world, and the direction of future events in their hands, and that they were not unwilling, upon proper application, to discover these events to their pious worshippers. \* “ The Gods (says Ammianus), either from the benignity of their own natures, and their love to mankind, or because men have merited this favour from them, take a pleasure in discovering impending events by various indications.” † This belief gave rise to astrology, augury, magic, lots, and an infinite multitude of religious rites and ceremonies; by which deluded mortals hoped to discover the counsels of Heaven, with regard to themselves and their undertakings. ‡ We learn from Pliny, that the ancient Britons were greatly addicted to divination, and excelled so much in the practice of all its arts, that they might have given a lesson to the Persians themselves. It will not certainly be thought necessary to give a minute laborious detail of all these arts of divination. It is sufficient to observe, that besides all those which were practised by them in common with other nations, they had one of a very horrid nature, which is thus described by Diodorus Siculus: “ They have a great veneration for

\* *Ælian. Variar. Hist. l. 2. c. 51.*

‡ *Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 50. c. 1.*

† *Ammian. Marcellin. l. 21.*

“ those who discover future events, either from  
 “ the flight of birds, or the inspection of the en-  
 “ trials of victims ; and all the people yield an  
 “ implicit faith to their oracles. On great oc-  
 “ casions, they practise a very strange and incre-  
 “ dible manner of divination. They take a man  
 “ who is to be sacrificed, and kill him with one  
 “ stroke of a sword above the diaphragm ; and,  
 “ by observing the posture in which he falls, his  
 “ different convulsions, and the direction in  
 “ which the blood flows from his body, they  
 “ form their predictions, according to certain  
 “ rules which have been left them by their  
 “ ancestors.” \*

By such acts of religious worship did the ancient Britons, in those times of darkness, express their pious affections, and endeavour to gain the favour, and discover the will of their Gods. These acts of religion were performed by them, at certain stated times, and in certain places, which were esteemed sacred, and appropriated to religious purposes ; which, with some other circumstances, claim a little attention.

It is impossible to support a public or national religion, without having certain times fixed for the celebration of its solemnities. Accordingly, there have been such times settled by the laws and customs of all nations in all ages ; and amongst others, by those of our British ancestors. When we consider how much the Gauls and Britons were

Times of  
their wor-  
ship.

\* Diod. Sicul. l. 5. c. 35.

addicted to superstition, we shall be inclined to think, that they had daily sacrifices and other acts of religion, at least in their most famous places of worship. The hours for these daily services were perhaps at noon and midnight, when they believed, according to Lucan, that the Gods visited their sacred groves. \* At noon, they probably paid their homage to the Sun and the celestial Gods; and at midnight, to the Moon and the infernal powers. The Britons certainly were not ignorant of that ancient and universal division of time into weeks, consisting of seven days each; for several writers of unquestionable veracity assure us, that this was known, not only to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, but to all the barbarous nations. † But whether one of these seven days in every week was consecrated to religion, is not so well known. The Britons divided their time by lunar months, reckoning neither from the change, nor from the full, but from the sixth day of one moon to the sixth day of another; and the first day of every lunar month, according to their way of reckoning, or the sixth, according to ours, was a religious festival. “This  
 “ (speaking of one of their most sacred solemnities), says Pliny, is always done on the sixth  
 “ day of the moon; a day so esteemed among  
 “ them, that they have made their months, and  
 “ years, and even ages, which consist but of

\* Lucan. l. 5, v. 423, &c.

† Joseph. contra Appion. l. 2. c. 69. Philo, l. 2. p. 657. Dio. Cass. l. 57. c. 18.



“ thirty years, to take their beginning from it.  
 “ The reason of their chusing that day is, because  
 “ the moon is by that time grown strong enough,  
 “ though not come to the half of its fulness.”\*

The Gauls and Britons had several annual festivals, which were observed with great devotion and solemnity. Of this kind was the august solemnity of cutting the mistletoe from the oak by the Archdruid; which is thus described by Pliny.

“ The Druids hold nothing so sacred as the  
 “ mistletoe of the oak. As this is very scarce,  
 “ and rarely to be found, when any of it is discovered, they go with great pomp and ceremony on a certain day to gather it. When  
 “ they have got every thing in readiness under  
 “ the oak, both for the sacrifice and the banquet  
 “ which they make on this great festival, they  
 “ begin by tying two white bulls to it by the  
 “ horns. Then one of the Druids, clothed in  
 “ white, mounts the tree, and with a knife of  
 “ gold cuts the mistletoe, which is received in a  
 “ white sagum. This done, they proceed to their  
 “ sacrifices and feastings.”†

This festival is said to have been kept as near as the age of the moon permitted to the tenth of March, which was their New-year's-day. The first day of May was a great annual festival, in honour of Belinus, or the sun.‡ On this day prodigious fires were kindled in all their sacred places, and on the tops

\* Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 16. c. 44.

† Id. ibid.

‡ Toland's Hist. Druids, p. 74. Mem. de l'Acad. Royale, v. 19, p. 489.

of all their cairns, and many sacrifices were offered to that glorious luminary, which now began to shine upon them with great warmth and lustre. Of this festival there are still some vestiges remaining, both in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, where the first of May is called Beltein, *i. e.* the fire of Bel, or Belinus.\* Midsummer-day and the first of November, already mentioned, were likewise annual festivals;† the one to implore the friendly influences of Heaven upon their fields, and the other to return thanks for the favourable seasons and the fruits of the earth; as well as to pay their yearly contributions to the ministers of their religion. Nay, it is even probable, that all their gods and goddesses, their sacred groves, their hallowed hills, lakes and fountains, had their several anniversary festivals;‡ so that the Druidish calendar was perhaps as much crowded with holidays as the Popish one is at present. On these festivals, after the appointed sacrifices and other acts of devotion were finished, the rest of the time was spent in feasting, singing, dancing, and all kinds of diversions. §

Places of  
worship.

It is no less necessary to the support of a public and national religion, to have certain places appointed for the performance of its various offices. There appear to have been many such places in

\* Toland's Hist. Druids, p. 69, &c.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ Pelloutier, Hist. Celt. l. 3. c. 9.

§ Tacit. de Mor. German. c. 40.

Britain, in the period we are now considering ; but very different from those structures which have been erected for the purposes of religion in later ages. It was an article in the Druidical creed, “ That it was unlawful to build temples to the “ Gods, or to worship them within walls and “ under roofs.” \* All their places of worship, therefore, were in the open air, and generally on eminences, from whence they had a full view of the heavenly bodies, to whom much of their adoration was directed. But that they might not be too much incommoded by the winds and rains, distracted by the view of external objects, or disturbed by the intrusion of unhallowed feet, when they were instructing their disciples, or performing their religious rites, they made choice of the deepest recesses of groves and woods for their sacred places. These groves were planted, for that purpose, in the most proper situations, and with those trees in which they most delighted. The chief of these was the strong and spreading oak, for which tree the Druids had a very high and superstitious veneration. “ The Druids (says “ Pliny) have so high an esteem for the oak, that “ they do not perform the least religious cere- “ mony, without being adorned with garlands of “ its leaves.—These philosophers believe, that “ every thing that grows upon that tree doth “ come from Heaven; and that God hath chosen

\* Tacit, de Mor. German. c. 9.

“ that tree above all others.” \* In this veneration for the oak, from whatever cause it proceeded, the Druids were not singular. The priests of many other nations, and even the Hebrew patriarchs, seem to have entertained an almost equal veneration for that tree. † These sacred groves were watered by some consecrated fountain or river, and surrounded by a ditch or mound, to prevent the intrusion of improper persons. In the centre of the grove was a circular area, enclosed with one or two rows of large stones set perpendicular in the earth; which constituted the temple, within which the altar stood, on which the sacrifices were offered. In some of their most magnificent temples, as particularly in that of Stonehenge, they had laid stones of prodigious weight on the tops of the standing pillars, which formed a kind of circle aloft in the air, and added much to the grandeur of the whole. Near to the temple (which is so called for want of a more proper word) they erected their *carneddes*, or sacred mounts; their *cromlechs*, or stone tables, on which they prepared their sacrifices, and all other things which were necessary for their worship. Though the sacred groves of the Druids have been long ago destroyed from the very roots, yet of the temples, *carneddes*, and *cromlechs*, which were enclosed within them, there are still

\* Plin. Hist. Nat. l. 16. c. 44.

† Gen. chap. 51. v. 4. S. Josh. 24. v. 26, &c. Cluver. German. Antiq. l. 1. c. 54.

many vestiges remaining in the British Isles, and other parts of Europe. \* Many readers will probably be better pleased with Lucan's poetical description of one of these Druidical groves than with the tedious prosaic one given above. †

There seems to be no necessary connexion between polytheism and idolatry, or the worship of many Gods and the worship of idols; though the one hath often introduced the other. The Egyptians, Persians, Romans, and other ancient nations, had no idols, images, or statues, for a long time after they began to worship many Gods. ‡ This was the case with the inhabitants of Britain when they were first invaded by the Romans.

\* Rowland's *Mona Antiq.* sect. 7—9. Keysler *Antiq. Septentrion*, p. 77. Martin's *Description of the Western Isles*, p. 9, &c.

† *Lucus erat longo nunquam violatus ab ævo,  
Obscurum cingens connexis æra ramis  
Et gelidas alte submotis solibus umbras.  
Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes  
Silvani, Nymphæque tenent, sed barbara ritu  
Sacra deum, structæ diris altaribus aræ,  
Omnis et humanis lustrata cruoribus arbor, &c. &c.*

Lucan, *Phars.* l. 3. v. 399.

Not far away for ages past had stood  
An old unviolated sacred wood;  
Whose gloomy boughs thick interwoven made  
A chilly cheerless everlasting shade:  
There, nor the rustic Gods, nor satyrs sport,  
Nor fawns and sylvans with the nymphs resort:  
But barb'rous priests some dreadful pow'r adore,  
And lustrate ev'ry tree with human gore, &c. &c.

Rowe's *Lucan*, book 3. l. 594.

‡ Cluver. *German. Antiq.* l. 1. c. 34. p. 241.



They worshipped many Gods, but they had no images of these Gods, at least none in the shape of men or other animals, in their sacred groves.\* But whether this proceeded from a religious principle, or from their ignorance of the art of sculpture, may be doubted. For though they had no artificial statues, yet they had certain visible symbols or emblems of their Gods. “All the Celtic nations (says Maximus Tyrius) worshipped Jupiter, whose emblem or representation amongst them was a lofty oak.”† The oaks which were used for this purpose were truncated, that they might be the better emblems of unshaken firmness and stability. Such were those in the Druidical grove described by Lucan.‡ Those images, which Gildas says were still remaining in his time, both within and without the walls of the ruinous heathen temples, had been erected by the Romans, or by the Britons after they were conquered, as well as the temples themselves. §

Decline of  
the Druids,  
and of  
their religion.

The British Druids were in the zenith of their power and glory at the beginning of this period; enjoying an almost absolute authority over the minds and persons of their own countrymen, and

\* Tacit. de Mor. Ger. c. 9.

† Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. 58.

‡ . . . Simulacraque mœsta deorum

Arte carent. Cæsisque extant informia truncis.

Lucan, l. 3. ver. 412.

. . . Strong knotted trunks of oak stood near,  
And artless emblems of their Gods appear.

§ Gildæ Historia, c. 2.

being greatly admired and resorted to by strangers. \* But as the Romans gained ground in this island, the power of the Druids gradually declined, until it was almost quite destroyed. For that victorious people, contrary to their usual policy, discovered every where a very great animosity against the persons and religion of the Druids. This animosity seems to have proceeded from the two following causes. Though the Romans still sacrificed millions of mankind to their ambition, and had formerly sacrificed great numbers of them to their Gods ; yet they now began to entertain a just abhorrence of those cruel rites, and to persecute the Druids and others who were guilty of them. The other and chief cause of the hatred of the Romans against the Druids, was of a political nature. Those priests were not only the ministers of religion, but (as we shall see in the next chapter) they were the civil judges, legislators, and even sovereigns in their several countries. They were sensible that if the Romans prevailed, it would be impossible for them to preserve their power ; and therefore they employed all their influence in animating their countrymen to make a vigorous resistance against those invaders, and in stirring them up to frequent revolts after they had submitted. On the other hand, the Romans were no less sensible that they could not establish their own authority, and secure the obedience of

\* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

Gaul and Britain, without destroying the authority and influence of the Druids in these countries. With this view they obliged their subjects in these provinces to build temples, to erect statues, and offer sacrifices after the Roman manner; and made severe laws against the use of human victims. They deprived the Druids of all authority in civil matters, and showed them no mercy when they found them transgressing the laws, or concerned in any revolt. By these means, the authority of the Druids was brought so low in Gaul, in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, about A. D. 45, that he is said by his historian to have destroyed them in that country.\* About the same time they began to be persecuted in the Roman province newly erected by that Emperor in the south-east parts of Britain; from whence many of them retired into the Isle of Anglesey, which was a kind of little world of their own. But they did not remain long undisturbed in this retirement. For Suetonius Paulinus, who was governor of Britain under Nero, A. D. 61, observing that the Isle of Anglesey was the great seat of disaffection to the Roman government, and afforded an asylum to all who were forming plots against it, he determined to subdue it. Having conducted his army into the island, and defeated the Britons who attempted to defend it, though they were animated by the presence, the prayers, and exhortations of a great

\* Sueton. in vita Claudii, c. 25.

multitue of Druids and Druidesses, he made a very cruel use of his victory. For not contented with cutting down their sacred groves, demolishing their temples, and overturning their altars, he burnt many of the Druids in those fires which they had kindled for sacrificing the Roman prisoners, if the Britons had gained the victory. \* So many of the Druids perished on this occasion, and in the unfortunate revolt of the Britons under Boadicia, which happened immediately after, that they never made any considerable figure after this period in South Britain. Such of them as did not think fit to submit to the Roman government, and comply with the Roman rites, fled into Caledonia, Ireland, and the lesser British isles, where they supported their authority and superstition for some time longer.

But though the dominion of the Druids in South Britain was destroyed at this time, many of their pernicious principles and superstitious practices continued much longer. Nay, so deeply rooted were these principles in the minds of the people both of Gaul and Britain, that they not only baffled all the power of the Romans, but they even resisted the superior power and divine light of the Gospel for a long time after they had embraced the Christian Religion. This is the reason that we meet with so many edicts of emperors, and canons of councils, in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, against the worship

Long duration of their superstitions.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 5.

of the sun, moon, mountains, rivers, lakes, and trees. \* This wretched superstition continued even longer in Britain than in some other countries, having been revived first by the Saxons, and afterwards by the Danes. It is a sufficient and melancholy proof of this, that so late as the eleventh century, in the reign of Canute, it was found necessary to make the following law against those heathenish superstitions: “We  
“ strictly discharge and forbid all our subjects  
“ to worship the Gods of the Gentiles; that is  
“ to say, the sun, moon, fires, rivers, fountains,  
“ hills or trees, and woods of any kind.” †

Having given this brief delineation of Druidism, and traced it from the beginning of this period to its decline and final extinction, we now proceed, with pleasure, to the more agreeable subject of the second section of this chapter.

\* Pelloutier Hist. Celt. l. 3. c. 4.

† L.L. Politic. Canuti Regis, c. 5. apud Lendenbrog. in Glossar. p. 1475.



## SECTION II.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, FROM ITS FIRST  
INTRODUCTION INTO SOUTH BRITAIN, TO THE AR-  
RIVAL OF THE SAXONS, A. D. 449.

AMONG the many evidences of the truth and divine origin of the Christian Religion, that which arises from its rapid progress in the world, and the astonishing success of its first preachers, is not the most inconsiderable. It is not, indeed, the province of the historian to pursue this argument, and set it in its full light, but only to lay the foundation on which it is built, by giving an impartial account of the time and manner in which the several nations were brought to the knowledge and belief of the Gospel. This is what we are now to attempt with regard to Britain.

Rapid pro-  
gress of  
the Gospel.

The religious as well as civil antiquities of nations are commonly involved in much obscurity. This is evidently the case with regard to the precise time in which the Christian Religion was introduced into this island. Either the first British Christians kept no memoirs of this happy event, or these memoirs have long since perished. Gildas, the most ancient of our historians, who flourished in the sixth century, declares that he could find no British records of

No British  
memoirs  
of the  
time when  
Christia-  
nity was  
first plant-  
ed in Bri-  
tain.

the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of Britain, while it was subject to the Romans; and assures us, that if any such records had ever existed, they had either been destroyed by their enemies, or carried into foreign countries by some of the exiled Britons. \* We must, therefore, with that ancient historian, be contented with what light and information we can collect from the writers of other nations, who incidentally mention the time, and other circumstances, of the planting of Christianity in this island.

Testimonies of writers about the time of planting Christianity in Britain.

It is highly probable, if not absolutely certain, from the concurring testimonies of several writers, and from other circumstances, that Britain was visited by the first rays of the Gospel before the end, perhaps about the middle, of the first century. † Tertullian, in his book against the Jews, which was written A. D. 209, positively affirms, “That those parts of Britain into which the Roman arms had never penetrated, were become subject to Christ.” ‡ From hence we may conclude, that Christianity had been known some time before this in the Roman provinces in South Britain. Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsaria, who flourished in the beginning of the fourth century, was equally famous for his learning and integrity, and being in high favour with Constantine the Great, had the

\* Gildæ Historia, c. 1.

† Du Pin's Church Hist. Cent. 2d. in Tertull.

‡ Tertull. contra Judæos, c. 7.

best opportunities of being well-informed of the state and history of the Christian Religion in all the provinces of the Roman empire. He wrote a book to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel; in which he endeavours to prove, that the apostles must have been assisted by some power more than human, since they had preached with so much success, in so many remote cities and countries, “to the Romans, Persians, Armenians, Parthians, Indians, Scythians, and to those which are called the British Islands.”\* Now, as the strength of this reasoning depended entirely on the truth of these facts, we have reason to suppose that Eusebius knew they were undeniable: and if they were so, it follows that the Gospel was preached in this island in the apostolic age. This is further confirmed by the following testimony of Theodoret: “These, our fishermen, publicans, and tent-makers, persuaded not only the Romans and their subjects, but also the Scythians, Sauromatæ, Indians, Persians, Seræ, Hyrcanians, Britons, Cimmerians, and Germans, to embrace the religion of him who had been crucified.”† Theodoret flourished in the former part of the fifth century, and was unquestionably one of the most learned fathers of the church. To these we may subjoin the testimony of Gildas, who seems to fix the time of the first introduction of

\* Euseb. *Demonst. Evang.* l. 5. c. 7. p. 115.

† Theod. tom. 4. ser. 9. p. 610.

the Christian Religion into South Britain about the period of the great revolt and defeat of the Britons under Boadicia, A. D. 61. For having briefly mentioned these events, he adds, "In the mean time, Christ the true sun afforded his rays; that is, the knowledge of his precepts to this island, benumbed with extreme cold, having been at a great distance from the sun; I do not mean the sun in the firmament, but the eternal sun in heaven." \* This was, no doubt, the tradition about this matter which prevailed in Britain in the beginning of the sixth century, when Gildas wrote; and it was probably not far from the truth.

Evidences  
from the  
state of  
Britain of  
the early  
introduc-  
tion of  
Christia-  
nity.

We shall be more disposed to give credit to these testimonies concerning the early introduction of the Christian Religion into Britain, when we consider the state of that country, and of the church in these times. The Emperor Claudius established a Roman province in the south-east parts of Britain, A. D. 43: a Roman colony was soon after settled at Camelodunum; London and Verulam had become large, rich, and flourishing municipia, or free cities, crowded with Roman citizens, before the revolt under Boadicia. All this must certainly have occasioned a constant and daily intercourse between Rome and Britain; so that whatever made any noise, or became the subject of attention in that great capital of the world, could not be long

\* Gildæ Historia, c. 6.

unknown in this island. Now, it is unquestionably certain that the Christian Religion had not only made great progress at Rome in the reign of Claudius, but had even engaged the attention of the government. \* It must therefore have been heard of, at least in Britain, before A.D. 54, when Claudius died. Before that year also, many Britons of high rank had been carried prisoners to Rome, and others had gone thither to negotiate their affairs at the Imperial court; and a much greater number of Romans had come from Rome into Britain, to occupy civil and military posts in this island. Can it be supposed, therefore, that none of these Britons, on their return into their own country, or of these Romans on their coming into this island, brought with them the knowledge of the Christian Religion? It is much more probable, that among those great multitudes of people of all ranks who came from Rome into Britain between A.D. 43, and A.D. 54, there were some, perhaps many Christians. Such, we have reason to think, was that famous lady Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the very first governor of the Roman province in Britain; of whom Tacitus gives this account: “ Pomponia  
“ Græcina, an illustrious lady, married to Plau-  
“ tius, who was honoured with an ovation or  
“ lesser triumph for his victories in Britain, was  
“ accused of having embraced a strange and

\* Suetonius in vita Claud. c. 25.



“foreign superstition ; and her trial for that  
“crime was committed to her husband. He,  
“according to ancient law and custom, con-  
“vened her whole family and relations ; and  
“having, in their presence, tried her for her  
“life and fame, pronounced her innocent of  
“any thing immoral. Pomponia lived many  
“years after this trial, but always led a gloomy  
“melancholy kind of life.” \* It is highly pro-  
bable, that the strange superstition of which  
Pomponia was accused, was Christianity ; for the  
Roman writers of these times knew very little of  
that religion, and always speak of it in such slight  
contemptuous terms.† The great innocence of  
her manners, and the kind of life which she had  
led after her trial, render this still more probable.  
Now, if this illustrious lady was really a Chris-  
tian, and accompanied her husband during his  
residence in Britain, from A.D. 43 to A.D.  
47, she might be one of the first who brought  
the knowledge of Christ into this island ; and  
might engage some of the first preachers of the  
Gospel to come into it in this very early period.  
But if the Christian Religion made great pro-  
gress and much noise at Rome in the reign of  
Claudius, it made much greater in that of his  
successor Nero. For about the third year of  
that reign, A.D. 57, St Paul, the most zealous,  
eloquent, and successful of the apostles, arrived

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 13. c. 52.

† Sueton. Nero, c. 16. Tacit. Annal, l. 15. c. 41.

at Rome, where he continued two whole years. preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. \* In this time, that great apostle made a prodigious number of converts of many different nations and of all ranks. For, in a letter which he wrote from that city to the Philippians, he acquaints them, that his having been sent a prisoner to Rome, had fallen out rather into the furtherance of the Gospel ; so that his bonds in Christ were manifest in all the palace, and in all other places. † Besides, there were many other Christian preachers at Rome, at that time, who all spoke with great boldness, and had their share of success. ‡ Now, among all these numerous converts, is it not very probable that there were some Britons, or some Romans who had occasion soon after to go into Britain ; or at least some who had friends in this island, to whom they would naturally communicate an account of the new religion which they had embraced ? There seems to be strong evidence, that there was at least one Briton of high rank and great merit among St Paul's converts. This was Claudia, mentioned with Pudens, 2 Tim. iv. 21., who is thought to be the same with Claudia, the wife of Pudens ; a British lady so much celebrated by Martial for her beauty and virtue, in the two

\* Acts, chap. 28. v. 31.

† Philippians, chap. 1. v. 12, 15.

‡ Ibid. v. 14.

epigrams in part quoted below.\* But however this may be, it appears to be morally certain, from all these testimonies and circumstances, that the first rays of the light of the Gospel reached the south-east parts of this island, some time between A. D. 43, and A. D. 61.

Small  
number of  
Christians  
in Britain  
before the  
persecu-  
tion under  
Nero.

But though the name of Christ was not altogether unknown in Britain in this very early period, yet the number of Christians in this island was then certainly very small; consisting perhaps of a few particular persons or families, who contented themselves with the private exercise of their religion, and with recommending it to their friends and neighbours, without much noise or observation. But this little flock gradually increased by converts at home, and accessions from abroad. After the suppression of the great revolt under Boadicia, Provincial Britain enjoyed great tranquillity for many years, under a succession of mild and good governors, and presented an inviting asylum to Christians who were cruelly persecuted in other parts, particularly at Rome. For the greatest part of that imperial city having been reduced to ashes by a

- \* Claudia, Rufe, meo nupsit peregrina Pudenti :  
Macte esto tædis O Hymenæe tuis, &c.

L. 4. Epigram. 15.

Claudia ceruleis cum sit Rufina Britannis  
Edita, cur Latîæ pectora gentis habet ?  
Quale decus formæ ! Romanam credere matres  
Italides possunt, Athides esse suam, &c.

L. 11. Epigram. 54.

dreadful fire, A. D. 64, the infernal tyrant Nero, to divert the suspicion of his having been the incendiary, laid the blame of it upon the Christians; and on that false pretence put prodigious numbers of these unpopular innocents to the most cruel kinds of death. "Some of them (says Tacitus) were wrapt in the skins of wild beasts, and torn in pieces by dogs; others were crucified; and others being burned, served as torches to enlighten the streets of the city in the night-time."\* From those direful sufferings, according to the permission of their gracious Master, great multitudes of Christians fled into other cities and countries; of whom, it is highly probable, not a few took shelter in this island, as a place of the greatest safety, and thereby greatly increased the number of Christians in Britain. From about this time, therefore, we may suppose the Christians in Britain began to be formed into religious societies, under spiritual guides, for the instruction of their minds and regulation of their manners, and, in a word, began to assume the face and form of a Christian church.

If it be not easy to ascertain the precise time when a Christian church was first planted in Britain, it is still more difficult to discover by whose ministry that church was planted. The accounts which are given us of this matter by ancient writers, are very various and unsatisfac-

Who  
planted  
Christi-  
anity in  
Britain.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 44.

tory; some ascribing the conversion of the Britons to one, and some to another of the apostles, or other primitive preachers of the gospel. It may not, however, be improper to mention, in a very few words, the most considerable of these accounts, though some of them are not a little absurd and improbable.

St James.

If this question were to be determined by a plurality of votes, the apostle James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of St John, would certainly be declared the apostle of the Britons, as well as of the Spaniards. For a great crowd of ancient historians, martyrologists, and other writers, collected by the most learned Archbishop Usher, affirm, that this apostle preached the Gospel in Spain, in the British Isles, and in other countries of the West.\* But it is almost impossible that this can be true; for we are assured by St Luke, that so early as A. D. 44, “Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”†

Simon Zelotes.

Some other writers acquaint us, that it was the apostle Simon surnamed Zelotes, who first preached the Gospel in the West, and particularly in the British Isles; and that he suffered martyrdom, and was buried in Britain. But a far greater number of writers, with much greater

\* Usser. de primord. Eccles. Brit. c. 1. p. 6.

† Acts, ch. 12. v. 1, 2.



probability, fix the scene of this apostle's labours and sufferings in the East. \*

Baronius, and some other writers of the church of Rome, who take all opportunities of magnifying the apostle Peter, though sometimes at the expense of his brethren, contend with great earnestness, that he was the first who preached the Gospel, and planted a Christian Church in Britain. † But they can produce no tolerable evidence or authority for this opinion; and it is certain nothing can be more improbable. Metaphrastes indeed says, and he is the only writer of any antiquity that says any thing of the matter, “ That St. Peter spent twenty-three years  
“ at Rome, and in Britain, and other countries  
“ of the West; and particularly, that he con-  
“ tinued a long time in Britain, converted many  
“ nations, constituted many churches, in which,  
“ having ordained bishops, presbyters, and dea-  
“ cons, he returned to Rome in the 12th year of  
“ Nero.” ‡ But Metaphrastes was a mere modern in comparison of the apostolic times, and his testimony, as Baronius acknowledges, is of little or no weight. § It appears from Scripture, that the charge of preaching the Gospel to those of the circumcision, was in a peculiar manner

\* Usserius de primord. Eccles. Brit. c. 1. p. 7.

† Baron. Annal. tom. 1. p. 557. Parson's Conversion of Brit. p. 19.

‡ Usser. de Eccles. Brit. primord. p. 7.

§ Baron. Annal. tom. 1. A. D. 61.

committed to St. Peter. \* From whence we may be certain, as well as from other evidence, that this apostle spent his life in preaching in Judea, Alexandria, Antioch, Babylon, and such countries as abounded with Jews, and not in Britain, where there were few or none of that nation at this time. It is not necessary to say any thing of the Caledonian apostleship of St. Andrew, for which very respectable authorities might be alleged; though it is certainly no better founded than that of his brother St. Peter's, in Provincial Britain. †

St. Paul.

There is only another of the apostolic college to whom the introduction of Christianity into Britain hath been ascribed, viz. the apostle Paul. And it must be confessed, that the tradition concerning him, is not only supported by very ancient and venerable authorities, but also that it doth not seem to be any way inconsistent with what we know with certainty of the character and history of that apostle. Theodoret, whose testimony hath been already produced to prove, that the Christian Religion was not altogether unknown in Britain in the days of the apostles, in some other places of his works insinuates, that the apostle Paul preached the Gospel in this island, as well as in Spain and other countries in the West. ‡ Clemens Romanus and St. Jerome say the same thing, in rather plainer

\* Galat. ch. 2. v. 7.

† Dr. M'Pherson's Dissert. p. 353.

‡ Usser, de Eccles. Brit. primord. p. 8.

terms. \* These testimonies of ancient writers, to which, if it were necessary, some others might be added, are confirmed by the consideration of several particulars in the writings, the character, and history of this apostle. Nothing is more certain, than that he was animated with the most fervent zeal for the propagation of the Christian Religion, and that he flew like lightning from one country to another in the execution of this design. It appears from his own writings, and from the canonical history of the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, that from the time when this apostle first began to preach the Gospel, to the time when he was sent prisoner to Rome, he had made an almost incredible number of journies into many countries of the East, where he preached the Gospel, and planted Christian Churches. † It appears too, from the same unquestionable authority, that some time before his imprisonment, he had a presage of that event, and a certain knowledge that he should never return again into the East; and that none of those among whom he had hitherto preached should see his face any more. ‡ He was released from his confinement at Rome, and set at full liberty to go where he pleased, A.D. 58; from which, to the time when he suffered martyrdom at Rome, A.D. 67, in the last year of Nero, was no less than nine years. Where

\* Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 37, 38.

† Acts, chap. 15—21.

‡ Ibid. chap. 20. v. 25.

then did this most active and zealous apostle spend these last nine years of his laborious life? To this question, it must be confessed, no very satisfactory answer can be given. The writings, as well as the persons, of the primitive teachers of Christianity, were exposed to the most cruel persecutions, and both very often perished in the same flames; which is the reason that we know so little of some parts of their history. But from several circumstances, it appears most probable, that St. Paul spent the last years of his life in the western provinces of the Roman empire, of which Britain was one. He had taken a final leave of the churches in the East, into which he had been assured, by a Divine revelation, that he never should return. He writes to Timothy from Rome, immediately after his deliverance, that the design of Providence in delivering him out of the lion's mouth, *i. e.* from the tyrant Nero, was, that his preaching might be fully known; and that all the Gentiles might hear; \* probably meaning those of the West, as well as those of the East. This apostle was always ambitious of preaching in countries where the name of Christ was not at all, or very little known, lest he should build upon another man's foundation. † Now, the Western provinces of the Roman empire presented him a large uncultivated field, where the name of Christ was very little known at the time of his

\* 2 Tim. ch. 4. v. 17.

† Romans, ch. 15. v. 20.

deliverance. It appears too, in particular, that his heart was very much set upon making a journey into Spain, by way of Rome, to preach the Gospel in that country. \* Is it not reasonable to suppose then, that he accomplished this design after he was released from his confinement at Rome? If he did this, and travelled through Gaul into Spain, and spent some years in these countries, it is not improbable that he also visited Britain, which was then become a large and flourishing province of the Roman empire. In a word, though it would be rash and unwarrantable in a modern writer to affirm positively, that the apostle Paul preached the Gospel in Britain, yet it is certainly no presumption to affirm, that if any of the apostles preached in this island, it was most probably the apostle Paul. †

The conversion of the first British Christians is, by some authors, ascribed to Aristobulus, who is mentioned by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans. ‡ This extraordinary person, of whom St. Paul says so little, was, according to these authors, very happy in a great number of excellent relations. For he was, as they pretend, the same with Zebedee, the father of the two apostles James and John, by his wife Salome; he was also brother to Barnabas, and father-in-law to the two apostles Peter and Andrew. A

Aristobulus.

\* Romans, ch. 15. v. 24. 28.

† Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 59—48.

‡ Chap. 16. v. 10.



person so well related could hardly fail to meet with preferment in the church. Accordingly, they tell us, that he was ordained a bishop by his son-in-law St. Peter, and sent to preach the Gospel in Britain, where he suffered martyrdom.\* All this is so palpably absurd and legendary that it merits no serious confutation.

Joseph of  
Arima-  
thea.

The honour of planting the first Christian church in South Britain, hath been bestowed by others upon Joseph of Arimathea, who buried our Saviour in his own new tomb.† Now, though the tradition of Joseph's coming into Britain is altogether improbable, and supported by no tolerable authority, yet as it has been seriously defended by some Popish writers, and (which is almost as absurd) seriously refuted by some Protestants, it may not be improper to gratify the reader's curiosity, by laying before him the first and most simple edition of this story, and also some of the embellishments which were afterwards added to it by other monkish writers. William of Malmsbury, in the beginning of his *History of the Antiquities of the Church of Glastenbury*, having mentioned the dispersion of the apostles by the persecution in which St. Stephen suffered martyrdom, he proceeds to this purpose: "That St. Philip came into the country of the Franks, where he converted many to the Faith; and being desirous of propagating the knowledge of Christ

\* Usser. de Eccles. Brit. primord. p. 9, 10.

† St. Matthew, chap. 27. v. 60.

“ still further, he chose twelve of his disciples,  
“ and having devoutly laid his right hand upon  
“ each of them, he sent them to preach the  
“ word of life in Britain, under the conduct of  
“ his dear friend Joseph of Arimathea, who bu-  
“ ried the Lord. These missionaries arriving in  
“ Britain, A. D. 63, from the assumption of the  
“ blessed Mary the 15th, they preached the  
“ Gospel with great zeal. The barbarous king  
“ of the country, however, and his subjects, re-  
“ jected their new doctrine, and would not  
“ abandon their ancient superstition; but as  
“ Joseph and his companions had come from a  
“ very distant country, and behaved modestly,  
“ he granted them a certain island in the bor-  
“ ders of his kingdom, called Iniswitrin, for  
“ their residence; and two other Pagan princes  
“ successively granted them twelve hides of land  
“ for their subsistence. These holy men living  
“ in this wilderness, being admonished by the  
“ angel Gabriel to build a church to the honour  
“ of the blessed Virgin, the mother of God,  
“ they were not disobedient to the divine com-  
“ mand, but built a small chapel of wattles in  
“ a place pointed out to them; a humble struc-  
“ ture indeed, but adorned with many virtues!  
“ For as this was the first Christian church in  
“ these regions, the Son of God was pleased to do  
“ it the singular honour of dedicating it himself  
“ to the honour of his mother.” \* Though this

\* Guliclm. Malmsb. de Antiq. Glasc. Eccles. apud Gal. tom. 1, p. 292.

original story hath a very decent proportion of the marvellous, it did not satisfy the luxuriant fancies of the monks of Glastenbury, who made almost as great a change in it, as they did in their old church of wattles, by their successive embellishments. It will be sufficient to convince us of this, to give the following short extract, which is said to have been taken out of the archives of the church of Glastenbury: "There were six hundred men and women who were to come over into Britain with Joseph of Arimathea, who having all taken a vow of abstinence till they came to land, they all broke it, except fifty, who came over the sea on the shirt of Josephus the son of Joseph. But the rest having repented of the breach of their vow, a ship was sent to bring them over, which had been built by King Solomon. There came over with them a duke of the Medes, called Necianus, formerly baptized by Joseph in the city of Saram, with the king of it, called Mordraius, who valiantly killed a king of North Wales, who kept Joseph a prisoner," &c. &c.\* It will not be necessary to spend any time in proving, that these monstrous fictions were the pure inventions of the monks of Glastenbury, to promote the reputation and riches of their monastery. For nothing could equal the wantonness and effrontery of the monks in the middle ages, in inventing

\* Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 15.

and propagating such extravagant legends, but the great simplicity of the people in believing them.\*

A modern writer of no little learning and sagacity, hath advanced it as a probable opinion, that Christianity was first planted in this island by missionaries who came immediately from the East, sent (as he thinks most likely) by the famous St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who suffered martyrdom, A. D. 170. † The only reason which he gives for this new and singular opinion is, the conformity of the British Christians with the churches of the East, about the time of keeping Easter. But nothing can be more certain, than that the Christian Religion was introduced into Britain, long before there was any talk, at least before there was any controversy, about the time of keeping Easter. That controversy doth not seem to have made any noise in the church, till about the middle of the second century, and probably did not reach Britain till some time after. Now, as the British church was not then under any subjection to the church of Rome, nor indeed any one national church subject to another, when this controversy about the time of keeping Easter came to be agitated among the British Christians, it is not at all surprising, that they chose to conform to the practice of the Eastern church, which was the mother

By missionaries from the East.

\* Vide Usser. de Eccles. Brit. primord. c. 2.

† Dr. M'Pherson's Dissert. 20.



of all other churches, and most likely to be in the right. To this they might be persuaded by some persons of influence amongst them, who had studied the controversy, and were well enough acquainted with the arguments on both sides.

First  
planters of  
Christianity in  
South Britain  
not  
certainly  
known.

Upon the whole, it must be acknowledged, that after all that hath been written on this subject, it is now impossible to discover with certainty, who were the first preachers of the Gospel, and the chief instruments of planting a Christian Church in this island. Nor have we any reason to be much concerned at this, since we know that we are indebted for this inestimable blessing to that gracious Being from whom every good and perfect gift cometh; and that to him, and not to the visible instruments of his providence, our supreme gratitude and thanks are due.

Cent. 2.  
Progress  
of the  
Gospel  
gradual.

As the Christian Religion was very early introduced into Britain, so, after its introduction, it continued to diffuse its light from one of the British nations unto another, until they were all in some measure illuminated. The progress of the Roman arms, though without any intention of theirs, contributed not a little to the progress of the Gospel, by reducing all the different nations of South Britain under one government, and thereby opening a free and uninterrupted intercourse over the whole country. As the conquest of South Britain was completed by the Romans before the end of the first century, we have reason to think, that the name and religion



of Christ were known, in some degree, in almost every corner of that country, about the beginning of the second. We have the greater reason to be of this opinion, when we consider, that, by the destruction of the Druids, which had happened before that time, one great obstacle to the progress of the Gospel was removed; and the minds of the Britons were left open to the impressions of a more pure and rational religion.

But though the first dawns of the Gospel had so early visited this island, and were so widely diffused, we cannot suppose that the number of Christians here was either very great in the second century, or that they were in general of the most distinguished rank. The perfect tranquillity, and freedom from persecution, which the Christians in Britain enjoyed during the whole of the second, and the greatest part of the third century, is a proof, not only of their prudent and peaceable behaviour, but also that they were not thought formidable for their power or numbers, by the Roman government. In other provinces of the Roman empire, where the number of Christians was become very great, they were severely persecuted in the beginning of this century, even by the most humane governors, under the mildest emperors; as by Pliny, under the Emperor Trajan, in Pontus and Bithynia.\* Indeed, if the famous story of the conversion of Lucius, King of Britain, and of his subjects, to

Conversion of  
King Lucius.

\* Plin. Epist. 97. l. 10.

the Christian faith, which is so gravely and circumstantially related by so many authors, could be believed, we should be led to entertain much higher ideas of the state of the British church in this period. But certainly there never was any story more evidently false, absurd, and contradictory, in almost every circumstance, than this of king Lucius, as it is related by different authors. Some of them make this Lucius king of all the British isles; some king of Britain; some king of South Britain; and some only a petty king of some part of South Britain, they know not where; and (to mention only another of the contradictory circumstances of this story) no fewer than twenty-three different dates have been assigned for this event of the conversion of king Lucius, by different writers.\* If there is any truth at all in this story, it requires more than human penetration and sagacity, to distinguish it from the heap of fables and contradictions under which it is buried. But that the reader's curiosity may not be disappointed, we shall lay before him the very short account of this matter which is given by Nennius, the most ancient of our historians by whom it is mentioned; and also the more pompous and circumstantial narration of Jeffrey of Monmouth. By comparing these two accounts together, he will observe how much this famous tale had improved between the seventh century, in which Nennius lived,

\* Usser. Eccles. Brit. primord. c. 5.

and the twelfth, in which Jeffrey of Monmouth flourished.

“ In the year 164 (says Nennius) from the  
 “ incarnation of our Lord, Lucius, monarch of Relation  
 of it by  
 Nennius.  
 “ Britain, with all the other petty kings of all  
 “ Britain, received baptism, from a deputation  
 “ sent by the Roman Emperors, and by the  
 “ Roman Pope Evaristus.”\* This is but a very  
 short story, and yet it contains at least two as  
 great falsehoods and absurdities as can well be  
 imagined. What can be more absurd and false  
 than to assert that there was a great British mo-  
 narch named Lucius, with many petty British  
 kings under him, at a time when all South Bri-  
 tain, and a considerable part of North Britain,  
 were under subjection to the Romans? Unless  
 it be still more absurd to affirm, that the two  
 heathen Emperors, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,  
 and Lucius Verus, sent deputies to convert and  
 baptize the kings and people of Britain. On  
 this foundation, however, which was laid by  
 Nennius, subsequent writers, by degrees, raised  
 a very magnificent structure, which was at length  
 brought to perfection, by the inventive and  
 romantic genius of Jeffrey of Monmouth, as  
 appears from the following narration.

“ Coilus had but one son, named Lucius, who,  
 “ obtaining the crown after his father’s death,  
 “ imitated all his acts of goodness, and seemed Relation  
 of it by  
 Jeffrey of  
 Mon-  
 mouth.  
 “ to his people to be no other than Coilus him-

\* Nennii Hist. Brit. c. 18.

“ self revived. As he had made this good  
“ beginning, he was willing to make a better  
“ end: for which purpose he sent letters to Pope  
“ Eleutherius, desiring to be instructed by him  
“ in the Christian Religion. For the miracles  
“ which Christ’s disciples performed in several  
“ nations, wrought conviction in his mind, so  
“ that being inflamed with an ardent love of the  
“ true faith, he obtained the accomplishment of  
“ his pious request. For that holy pope, upon  
“ receipt of this devout petition, sent to him  
“ two most religious doctors, Faganus and  
“ Duvanus, who, after they had preached con-  
“ cerning the incarnation of the Word of God,  
“ administered to him baptism, and made him  
“ a proselyte to the Christian Faith. Imme-  
“ diately upon this, people from all countries  
“ assembling together, followed the King’s ex-  
“ ample, and, being washed in the same holy  
“ laver, were made partakers of the kingdom of  
“ Heaven. The holy doctors, after they had  
“ almost extinguished Paganism over the whole  
“ island, dedicated the temples, that had been  
“ founded in honour of many Gods, to the one  
“ only God and his saints, and filled them with  
“ congregations of Christians. There were then  
“ in Britain eight-and-twenty flamens, as also  
“ three archflamens, to whose jurisdiction the  
“ other judges and enthusiasts were subject.  
“ These also, according to the apostles’ com-  
“ mand, they delivered from idolatry, and where  
“ they were flamens made them bishops, where



“ archflamens archbishops. The seats of the  
 “ archflamens were at the three noblest cities,  
 “ viz. York, London, and Caerleon upon Uske,  
 “ in Glamorganshire. Under these three, now  
 “ purged from superstition, were made subject  
 “ twenty-eight bishops, with their dioceses.” \*

An astonishing revolution indeed ! and the more astonishing, that it was brought about by the influence of a British king, at a time when there could be no British king on the south side of the firths of Forth and Clyde, except in a state of entire subordination to the Romans. But honest Jeffrey does not stop here. Though he had provided the infant church of Britain with a very decent set of archbishops and bishops, who had been archflamens and flamens, he was sensible that they would have made but an awkward figure in their new character without good houses and good livings, and therefore he hath taken care to make them rather better in that respect than they had been before, that they might have no reason to repent the change of their religion. For a little further he adds, “ That the glorious  
 “ King Lucius, being highly rejoiced at the  
 “ great progress the true faith and worship had  
 “ made in his kingdom, granted, that the pos-  
 “ sessions and territories formerly belonging to  
 “ the temples of the Gods, should now be con-  
 “ verted to a better use, and appropriated to  
 “ Christian churches. And, because greater

\* Gaulfrid, Monumut. l. 4. c. 19.



“honour was due to them than to the others,  
 “he made large additions of lands and mansion-  
 “houses, and all manner of privileges to them.”  
 It was very fortunate for these right reverend  
 converts that good king Lucius was of so differ-  
 ent a disposition from his famous successor,  
 Henry VIII. Jeffrey at last finishes the history  
 of this wonderful monarch by telling us, “That  
 “he departed this life in the city of Gloucester,  
 “and was honourably buried in the cathedral  
 “church, in the hundred and fifty-sixth year  
 “after our Lord’s incarnation.”\* Such is the  
 account which is given by Jeffrey of Monmouth  
 of the conversion of king Lucius, and its im-  
 portant consequences. A late church historian  
 says, very gravely, “That this account looks  
 “very suspicious;” and takes much learned  
 pains to prove, that the Pagan and Christian  
 hierarchy were not so very like, and so easily  
 convertible into one another as Jeffrey hath  
 represented them. “That there were British  
 “bishops (says he) in Lucius’s time, is without  
 “question;” but he seems to think that this  
 good king had it not in his power to provide  
 quite so well for them.† The truth is, that it is  
 almost equally ridiculous to draw any serious  
 consequences from this extravagant story, or to  
 take any pains in refuting it; since every one  
 who knows any thing of the state of Britain at

\* Gaulfrid. Monumut. l. 5. c. 1.

† Collier’s Eccleslaaf. Hist. v. 1. p. 13, 14.

that time, must know, that it contains as many falsehoods and impossibilities as sentences.

If there is any truth at all in this story of King Lucius, it cannot possibly be any more than this: That some time or other in the second century, there was a petty prince or chieftain of the Britons in favour with the Romans, and indulged by them with some degree of authority in his country, who embraced the Christian Religion, and promoted the conversion of his friends and followers, to the utmost of his power. This might possibly happen; but whether it did happen or not is certainly very doubtful, since Gildas, the most ancient of our historians, who was a Briton and a zealous Christian, gives not the least hint of such a thing.

What little truth there might be in the story of King Lucius.

The happy situation of the Christians in Britain preserved them from the contagion of those fatal heresies which were broached in the second century, and greatly disturbed the peace of the Christian church, and obstructed the progress of the Gospel in other places. For the heresiarchs of this early period, as Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinus, Montanus, &c. being either Egyptians or Asiatics, countries with which Britain had little or no intercourse, the Christians in this island remained in a happy ignorance of their peculiar opinions; and continued to enjoy the light of the Gospel in the same purity in which it had been communicated to them by their first teachers. This circumstance contributed not a little both to the internal peace and external

safety of the infant church of Britain, and preserved it from many calamities which fell upon other churches which were infected with these heresies.

Cent. 3.  
Further  
progress of  
Christianity.

Though it is abundantly evident, that the Christian Religion was very far from being established in Britain in this early period, so generally, or with so much eclat and splendour as the Monkish writers pretend, yet it plainly appears, that it not only subsisted, but even continued gradually to gain ground. For about the beginning of this century (according to the testimony of Tertullian, already quoted) it had extended beyond the limits of the Roman province, into those parts of Britain which had not submitted to the arms of that victorious people.\* This was probably brought about by the ministry of some of the provincial Britons, who having embraced Christianity, and being animated with an ardent zeal for the propagation of their new religion, communicated the knowledge of it to the free and independent Britons, who were of the same stock, and spoke the same language with themselves. How far the light of the Gospel penetrated, at this time, into the wilds of Caledonia, it is impossible to discover.

The Christian churches in Asia, Africa, and on the Continent of Europe, were, during the whole of this century, persecuted and relieved by turns, according to the different dispositions of the

\* Tertul. contra Judæos, c. 7.

reigning emperors, and of the governors, priests, and people of the provinces where they were planted.\* It was the peculiar felicity of the Christians in Britain, to enjoy a profound tranquillity and peace, for the greatest part of this age. This might be owing, under Providence, to their distant situation; to the humanity of their governors; to the want of power in the heathen priests; to their own prudent and peaceable behaviour; and perhaps to other causes, to us unknown.

At last, the flames of persecution, which had often raged with so much violence in other countries, reached this peaceful and sequestered corner of the Roman empire. This persecution broke out in Britain some time in the reign of the Emperor Dioclesian, who assumed the purple A. D. 284, and laid it aside A. D. 305; but in what year of this reign it began, and how long it continued, cannot be discovered. Gildas, the most ancient of our historians, says, that it continued nine years in some other countries, but only two in Britain; and expresses himself in such a manner, as would lead us to think they were the last two years of Dioclesian's reign.† This agrees well enough with the accounts of the most ancient church historians, who represent this persecution as raging with the greatest violence in the begin-

Persecution in Britain.

\* Mosheim Hist. Eccles. sæcul. 3. c. 2. Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 7. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 4.

† Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 7, 8.



ning of the fourth century.\* But venerable Bede, and the greatest number of our old historians, place this persecution, and the martyrdom of St Alban, in the year 286. The truth is, if either Dioclesian, or his colleague Maximianus, had any hand in this persecution, it must have been either near the beginning or near the end of their joint reign; for, in the intermediate time, Britain was governed more than ten years, first by Carausius, and afterwards by Alectus, in a manner quite independent of these emperors.† Not only are we thus uncertain about the precise time of this persecution, but the accounts which we have of its other circumstances are very unsatisfactory; being given us by Monks, a set of men who could not abstain from the marvellous, where religion was concerned.‡ The truth, when separated from the legendary and miraculous embellishments with which it is adorned by these writers, seems to have been this: That some time near the end of the third, or beginning of the fourth century, the Christians in the Roman province in Britain were persecuted for their religion: that in this persecution St Alban, a native of Verulamium, suffered martyrdom in that city, and was the first British martyr: that besides him, Aaron and Julius, two citizens of Caerleon, and many others, both men and women, in

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 6. Iactant. de Mort. Perseq. c. 14. p. 601.

† Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 8. c. 6. Biographia Britannica, c. 1. p. 83. note E.

‡ Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 8. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 7.



several different places, suffered at the same time, in the same glorious cause : but that a stop was soon put to this cruel persecution by the good providence of God, and the church restored to a state of tranquillity.

We have not materials to enable us to give a satisfactory and authentic account of the government, doctrine, and worship of the ancient British churches in the first three centuries, before they received any protection and support from the civil government. We have already seen the pompous plan of Jeffrey of Monmouth, said to have been copied from the Pagan hierarchy by King Lucius. His countryman, Giraldus Cambrensis, presents us with a still more splendid and extensive form of ecclesiastical government, in imitation of the civil government of the Romans, which (as he says) was settled in Britain in the days of this wonderful king, above two hundred years before the arrival of the Saxons. “ Accord-  
 “ ing to the number of provinces which were in  
 “ Britain in the times of Paganism, five metro-  
 “ politans were settled, one in each province ;  
 “ with twelve suffragans under each metropolitan  
 “ in twelve different cities. The metropolitan  
 “ of the first province was seated at Caerleon,  
 “ with twelve suffragans under him : the metro-  
 “ politan of the second province at Canterbury,  
 “ with twelve suffragans under him : the metro-  
 “ politan of the third province at London, with  
 “ twelve suffragans under him : the metropolitan  
 “ of the fourth province at York, with twelve

Government, doctrine, and worship of the British churches in the first three centuries.

“ suffragans under him : the metropolitan of the  
 “ fifth province at St Andrews, with twelve  
 “ suffragans under him.”\* A most regular and  
 beautiful plan, consisting of five archbishops and  
 sixty bishops, very properly disposed ! But, as  
 Sir Henry Spelman modestly observes, “ Giral-  
 “ dus Cambrensis seems to have run riot as  
 “ much in this narration, as Jeffrey of Mon-  
 “ mouth.” The doctrine of the British churches,  
 in the first three centuries, was probably much  
 the same in substance with that of the apostles  
 creed, as we are assured both by Gildas and  
 Bede that they were not infected with any heresy,  
 till they came to be tainted with that of Arius.†  
 In their ceremonies and rites of worship, it is not  
 to be imagined they differed much from the other  
 churches of these times, or had any thing very  
 singular ; only in the keeping of Easter, they  
 imitated the churches of Asia, rather than that  
 of Rome.‡

How the  
 expenses  
 of religion  
 were de-  
 frayed in  
 the first  
 three cen-  
 turies.

It is natural to inquire in what manner the  
 clergy were maintained, churches built, and the  
 other expenses of religion defrayed, in the ancient  
 British church, as well as in other primitive  
 churches, in the first three centuries, when they  
 received no favour, protection, or support from the  
 state. The apostles, their fellow-labourers, and  
 perhaps some of their immediate successors, were

\* Giraldus, apud Spelman. Concilia. tom. 1. p. 15, 16.

† Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 9. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 8.

‡ See King's Inquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church, Part the Second.

supported partly by the work of their own hands, and partly by the grateful contributions of the faithful.\* In these primitive times, when a competent number of persons were converted to the Christian Religion in any place, sufficient to constitute a decent congregation, they formed themselves into a church or religious society; and every member of this society contributed, according to his abilities, to the maintenance of those who ministered in holy things, to the support of the poor, and to all other necessary charges. The contributions for these purposes were commonly made in their religious assemblies on the first day of the week, according to the apostolic direction.† Many of the primitive Christians, full of the most ardent zeal for their religion, did not content themselves with giving their share to these stated contributions for those pious uses, but bestowed houses, gardens, and even lands upon the church, or left them to it by their last wills.‡ It appears, however, that the Christians of Britain, in this early period, were either not very liberal to their clergy, or, which is more probable, not very rich. For the British bishops, as we shall see by and by, were remarkably indigent, even in the next century, when the church enjoyed the favour of the civil government. But whatever was the state of the

\* 1 Thess. c. 2. v. 9. 2 Thess. c. 5. v. 8. Galatians, c. 6. v. 6.

† 1 Corinth. c. 16. v. 1, 2,

‡ Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. c. 4. p. 177.

revenues of the clergy in those times of poverty and persecution, no inference can certainly be drawn from it to determine what it ought to be in more opulent and happy ages.

Cent. 4.  
Christians  
delivered  
from per-  
secution.

After the churches of Christ, in almost all the provinces of the Roman empire, had been so long exposed to the most cruel persecutions which broke out upon them from time to time, it pleased the Divine Providence to put an end to their trials and sufferings of this kind in the former part of the fourth century. The British Christians were the very first who enjoyed the advantage of this great deliverance. For Constantius Chlorus being in Britain when he was declared Emperor, upon the resignation of Dioclesian and Maximianus, A.D. 305, he immediately put a stop to the persecution of the Christians, which before he had been obliged to permit, in obedience to the edicts of these emperors. \* This excellent prince having died at York the year after, he was succeeded by his illustrious son Constantine the Great, who proved the glorious instrument of delivering the Christian church from all the grievous oppressions under which it had so long groaned. Though there is no reason to think that Constantine the Great was a Christian at the time of his accession, yet it appeared, even before he left Britain, that he was determined to protect the Christians from persecution, and to show them still greater favour than his father had done.

\* Euseb. Hist l. 8. c. 13.



Encouraged by these favourable dispositions in the new Emperor, who had assumed the purple in their country, the British Christians came out of the lurking-places, into which they had retired to avoid the late persecution, rebuilt their ruined churches, and kept their sacred solemnities with pure and joyful hearts.\*

It had been usual, from the very days of the apostles, when any dispute arose among the faithful about doctrines, discipline, or worship, for as many of the clergy to meet together as convenient, to examine the matter in question, and to give their opinion about it; which was generally decisive, and received with great submission. These meetings of the clergy were called synods, or councils. In the first three centuries when the Christian church did not enjoy the protection of the state, these councils were held with great privacy, and their transactions are little known.† But as soon as Constantine the Great began to declare more openly in favour of the Christian Religion, and to interest himself warmly in the affairs of the church, these assemblies of the clergy became more frequent, more splendid, and more important. They were called by the Emperor, sometimes honoured with his presence, and their decrees enforced and executed by his authority. It is a demonstration that the British church was in a settled and respectable state near the begin-

British bishops in the council of Arles. A. D. 314.

\* Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 8. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 8.

† Du Pin's Eccles. Hist. v. 1. p. 192.



ning of this century, that we find some of her clergy in one of the first of these councils which was called by the Emperor. This was the council of Arles, which met in that city, A.D. 314. Among the clergy who were summoned to this council, and subscribed its decrees, we meet with these following ; Eborus, Bishop of York ; Restitus, Bishop of London ; Adelfius, Bishop of Colonia Londinensium (it should probably be Colonia Lindum, Lincoln) ; Sacerdos, a presbyter, and Arminius, a deacon, of the same city.\* This council was not very numerous, consisting only of thirty-three bishops, and a still smaller number of presbyters and deacons, summoned as representatives of the clergy, out of all the provinces of the Western empire. Of these bishops, there were indeed four out of the province of Vienne in Gaul, of which Arles was the capital, on account of their vicinity, but only one out of every other province ; and there being only three Roman provinces then in Britain, three bishops was its full proportion. This seems to intimate that the churches in Britain were at this time viewed in the same light, and treated on the same footing, with those of the other provinces of the empire.

Kindness  
of Con-  
stantine to  
the Chris-  
tian clergy.

As Constantine the Great became more open in his profession of the Christian Religion, he became also more liberal of his favours to the Christian clergy, who now began to feel the cheering influences of royal favour. But in this he

\* Spelman. Concil. tom. 1. p. 42.

proceeded with great prudence, equity, and caution, granting them only such favours as did no injury or injustice to any other set of men. By one edict he exempted the Christian clergy from military and other burdensome services, that they might enjoy leisure and freedom to attend the duties of their sacred function. By another edict, he bestowed all the goods and possessions of the late martyrs who had died without heirs, upon the church. But the famous edict which he published at Rome, July 3d, A.D. 322, was of far greater advantage to the clergy than all the rest.\* By this edict, Constantine gave full liberty to persons of all ranks to give, by their last wills, as great a part of their estates as they pleased to the church. At Rome, and in other opulent cities, this last edict greatly enriched the clergy in a little time, by the liberal donations of many wealthy Christians.† But as the Christians in this island were not in general so wealthy as in some other countries, riches did not flow with so rapid a tide into the British churches as into others. The offer which the Emperor Constantius made to the bishops of the Western empire, assembled at the council of Ariminum, A.D. 359, to maintain them at the public charge, was refused by them all, except three of those who came from Britain; who, not being able to maintain themselves, chose rather to accept of the Emperor's

Cent. 4.

\* Cod. Theod. l. 16. c. 2. Euseb. l. 10. e. 7. Zosimen, l. 1. c. 9. Euseb. vit. Constant. l. 2. c. 56.

† M. le Beau. Hist. de Bas Empire, tom. 1. p. 519.

offer, than be a burden to their brethren ; \* a proof that all the bishops of the Western empire, except a very few, were already raised to a state of independency, within less than forty years after the making of the last-mentioned edict. So great was the zeal and liberality of the Christians of these times !

Doctrines  
of the  
British  
churches  
in this  
century.

The Christian church was no sooner delivered from external violence, by the conversion of Constantine, than it was torn in pieces by internal discord ; and the flames of persecution were quickly succeeded by the no less violent and destructive flames of religious controversy. The most fatal of these controversies was that which broke out A.D. 317, between Arius, a presbyter in the church of Alexandria, and Alexander, bishop of that city, about the divinity of Christ. This dispute was managed with great warmth, made a mighty noise, and in a little time destroyed the peace of almost every corner of the Christian church. It is difficult to discover how soon the opinions of Arius became known in Britain, or to what degree they prevailed here in this century. If we could depend upon the testimony of Gildas, we should be led to think, that Arianism had made great progress in this island, soon after its first appearance. For having described the happy and peaceful state of the British church for some time after the conclusion of the Dioclesian persecution, he proceeds in this strain : “ This

\* Sulpit. Sever., Hist. l. 2.

“ sweet concord between Christ the head and  
“ his members continued until the Arian perfidy  
“ appeared, and, like an enraged serpent, pour-  
“ ing in upon us its foreign poison, inflamed  
“ brethren and countrymen with the most cruel  
“ hatred : and a passage being thus made over  
“ the ocean, every other wild beast, who carried  
“ the venom of any heresy in his horrid mouth,  
“ easily instilled it into the people of this country,  
“ who are ever unsettled in their opinions, and  
“ always fond of hearing something new.”\* But  
the truth is, this lamentable declaimer being de-  
termined to load his unhappy countrymen with  
the imputation of every thing which he esteemed  
bad and odious, and having a great abhorrence of  
all heresy in general, and of Arianism in particular,  
represented them as deeply infected with that and  
every other heresy, perhaps without much ground.  
For the opinions of Arius had been condemned  
with so much solemnity by the famous council  
of Nice, A. D. 325, (at which it is very pro-  
bable the bishops of Britain assisted), and had  
been opposed with so much zeal by Constantine  
the Great and his son Constans, that they made  
little progress for a long time in the Western pro-  
vinces of the Roman empire. It is true, indeed,  
that at the council of Ariminum, A. D. 359,  
which was called by the Emperor Constantius,  
who favoured the Arian party, almost all the  
bishops of the West, who were there assembled to

\* Gildæ Hist. Brit. c. 9.



the number of four hundred, and, amongst others, those of Britain, subscribed a creed, which differed a little from that of the council of Nice.\* But this appears to have been the effect of mere force. For, at the beginning of the council, they unanimously declared their approbation of the Nicean creed, and pronounced anathemas against the errors of Arius; and after their return into their respective dioceses, they renewed their former declarations in favour of the faith of Nice, and renounced their involuntary subscriptions at Ariminum, as soon as they could do it with safety.† This is a certain proof that the opinions of Arius had as yet made little or no progress among the clergy in the Western empire; though it is at the same time an evidence, that the spirit of enduring persecution was very much abated. St. Athanasius, and the bishops assembled in the council of Antioch, A.D. 363, assure the Emperor Jovian, in their letter to him, that the bishops of Spain, Gaul, and Britain, continued to adhere to the faith of the council of Nice; of which they had been informed by letters from these bishops.‡ Both St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom speak often of the orthodoxy of the British church in their writings.§ From all which it seems highly probable, that the Arian

\* Du Pin, *Eccles. cent. 4. vol. 2. p. 263.*

† Hilar. *Fragment. p. 451.*

‡ Athanas. *Græco. Lat. tom. 1. p. 599.*

§ Hieron. *ad Euagrium, ad Mareil. Chrysost. tom. 3. p. 696. tom. 6. p. 635. tom. 8. p. 111.*



opinions did not prevail much in the ancient British churches ; at least not in this century.

After the conversion of Constantine, he and his successors interested themselves greatly in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, and acted as

Government of the British church in cent. 4.

the supreme heads on earth of the church, as well as of the state. By their authority the hierarchy was brought to an almost perfect conformity with the civil government of the Roman empire. In order to this, several new ecclesiastical dignitaries, as patriarchs, metropolitans, and archbishops, were established in the church, to correspond to the præfecti, prætorii, vicarii, and præsides provinciarum in the state.\* According to this model there should have been one metropolitan, and first three, then four, and at last five archbishops in Britain; as it was one vicariate under the prefectus prætorii of Gaul, and consisted, first of three, afterwards of four and at last of five provinces. But it seems probable, that this model of church government was never fully established in Britain, on account of the unsettled state of the country, and the poverty of the British churches, which could not well support so many prelates of so high a rank agreeable to their dignity. But whatever was the state of ecclesiastical government in the British churches in this period, there is no evidence that they were subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, or of any foreign bishop.†

\* Mosheim. Hist. Eccles. sæcul. 4, p. 156.

† Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. ch. 5.

Rites of  
worship  
in the  
fourth cen-  
tury.

While the churches of Christ were obnoxious to the civil powers, and every moment in danger of persecution, they performed the rites of their religious worship with much privacy and little pomp. This was most agreeable to the pure and spiritual nature of the Christian worship, and most conducive to real piety. But after they came to enjoy security, wealth, and royal favour, they began to embellish their worship with many new-invented ceremonies, and even adopted some of the Pagan rites and practices with little alteration. Great numbers of magnificent churches were built, and adorned with the pictures of saints and martyrs, in imitation of the Heathen temples; the Christian clergy officiated in a variety of habits, not much unlike those of the Pagan priests; fasts, festivals, and holidays were multiplied; and, in one word, an ostentatious and mechanical worship, hardly to be distinguished in its outward appearance from that of their Heathen neighbours, was introduced in the place of pure and rational devotion.\* The Christian clergy were betrayed into this criminal and fatal imitation of their Pagan predecessors, partly by their vanity and love of pomp, and partly by their hopes of thereby facilitating the conversion of the Heathens. There was, indeed, an almost infinite variety in the forms of religious worship in the Christian church at this time; and almost

\* Mosheim. Hist. Eccles. sæcul. 4, c. 4, p. 175. Dr Middleton's Letter from Rome, in his Works, vol. 3.

every particular church had something peculiar in its way of worship. The British churches differed considerably from those of Gaul, and still more from those of Italy, in their public service, and had not as yet departed so far from the genuine simplicity of the Gospel.\* The British Christians, however, of this age did not want their share of superstition; of which it will be sufficient to give one example. About this time it began to be imagined, that there was much sanctity in some particular places, and much merit in visiting them. The places which were esteemed most sacred, and were most visited, were those about Jerusalem, which had been the scenes of our Saviour's actions and sufferings. To these holy places prodigious numbers of pilgrims crowded from all parts of the Christian world, and particularly from Britain. "Though the Britons" (says St. Jerome) are separated from our world "by the intervening ocean, yet such of them" "as have made any great progress in religion," "leaving the distant regions of the West, visit" "those sacred places at Jerusalem, which are" "known to them only by fame, and the relations of Holy Scripture."† Nay, some of these deluded superstitious vagabonds, who had more strength or more zeal than others, went as far as Syria, to see the famous self-tormentor Simeon Stylites, who lived fifty-six years on the

\* Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 216, &c.

† Hieron. tom. 1. epist. 17.

top of a high pillar. “ Many people came to  
 “ see him (says Theodoret his historian) from  
 “ the most remote corners of the West, particu-  
 “ larly from Spain, Gaul, and Britain.” \*

Origin of  
 the monas-  
 tic life in  
 Britain.

In this century, a new order of ecclesiastics appeared in Europe. These were the monks, or regular clergy, who, in process of time, made a most conspicuous figure in the Christian church, and, by professing poverty, and pretending to renounce the world, arrived at a prodigious pitch of worldly wealth and power. This extraordinary order had its origin in Egypt, the native country and favourite soil of superstition. In the times of persecution, several Christians in Egypt retired into deserts to avoid its fury, and there lived a very solitary and abstemious life, subsisting for the most part on the pure element, and the spontaneous productions of the earth. St Anthony, the father of the monastic life, was one of these solitaries, and acquired so great a fame for sanctity, that many persons flocked around him in his retirement, and put themselves under his conduct. These he formed into fraternities about the beginning of this century, placed them in monasteries, and gave them rules for their behaviour.\* St Pachomius and Hilarion, two of his admirers, soon after founded monasteries in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria; and the East was in a few years overrun with these wretched fanatics, who seemed to think that the perfection of reli-

\* Theodoret. Philothens. c. 26.

† Acta Sanctorum, tom. 2. p. 107.



gion consisted in being useless and miserable. This spirit penetrated into Europe about the middle of this century, and unhappily prevailed almost as much in the West as it had done in the East.\* It is difficult to discover at what time the monastic life was introduced into this island, and to what degree it prevailed in the ancient British church. For no regard is due to the absurd and impossible stories of our monks of the middle ages, about the famous monasteries which were built here in the days of king Lucius.† Nor can we give credit to all the extraordinary things which are told us by the same authors, of the famous British monastery of Banchor, not far from Chester, which contained, as they pretend, no fewer than two thousand one hundred monks, divided into seven courses, each course containing three hundred.‡ But though this is probably very much exaggerated, we have reason to believe in general, that there were monks and monasteries in Britain before the end of this century, as well as in the other provinces of the Western empire, and particularly one at Banchor Monachorum. There was one very essential difference between these ancient British monks, and those who succeeded them in aftertimes. The British monks of Banchor, and no doubt in other places, supported themselves in a frugal manner, by the work of their own hands; and while a certain

\* Mosheim Hist. Eccles. sæcul. 4. c. 5.

† Usserii Brit. Eccles. primord. p. 194.

‡ Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 2.



number of them were performing the offices of religion, the rest were employed in labour, by a regular rotation.\* But the monks who succeeded them, in the middle ages, were maintained in sloth and luxury, by the mistaken charity and profuse donations of kings, nobles, and other wealthy persons.

Cent. 5.

From the beginning of the fifth century to the arrival of the Saxons, the inhabitants of South Britain were involved in a variety and succession of national calamities, which seemed to threaten their ruin and extirpation. Besides the desolating evils of war, pestilence, and famine (mentioned in the first chapter of this book), they were distracted and torn in pieces by religious disputes, in this unhappy period. These disputes were occasioned by the introduction and spreading of the peculiar opinions of Pelagius, which were maintained by some, and impugned by others with the most vehement and acrimonious zeal. This famous heresiarch was a native of Britain; which might be one reason why his opinions met with so favourable a reception, and so many advocates in this island.† It is not necessary to enumerate all the opinions of Pelagius; the most important and plausible of them were these following: “That Adam was naturally mortal, and would have died though he had not sinned; that Adam’s sin affected only himself, but not his posterity; and that

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 2.

† Id. l. 1. c. 10.

“children at their birth are as pure and innocent as Adam was at his creation : That the grace of God is not necessary to enable men to do their duty, to overcome temptation, and even to attain perfection ; but they may do all this by the freedom of their own wills, and the exertion of their natural powers.” \*

These opinions, so soothing to the pride of men, were propagated in Britain with great success by some of the disciples of Pelagius, particularly by one named Agricola, the son of Severianus, a bishop ; while Pelagius himself, and his other followers, Celestus a Scotsman, and Julianus of Campania, were employed in the same work at Rome and other places. †

The orthodox clergy in Britain did every thing in their power to put a stop to the progress of these errors ; but finding all their efforts in vain, and that they were not so expert in the arts of controversy as their subtile adversaries, they sent into Gaul for assistance in this spiritual warfare. The bishops of Gaul, being assembled in a great council, appointed two of their number, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, to go to the assistance of their brethren in Britain, who were so hard pressed. The two good bishops cheerfully obeyed

Public disputation between the orthodox and the Pelagians.

\* Usser. Eccles. Britan. primord. p. 218. Concil. Lab. tota. 2. p. 1529.

† Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 10—17.

the appointment, and embarked for the scene of action; but when they had proceeded about half way on their voyage, with a favourable gale, the devil (who it seems was a great friend to the Pelagians) raised a most violent storm with a design to drown them; from which, however, they escaped by a miracle. At their arrival on the British shore, they found a great multitude of orthodox Christians waiting to receive them, having got intelligence of their approach in a very extraordinary way. \* The bishops, without delay, engaged in the important work on which they were sent, and by their preaching, sometimes in the churches, and sometimes in the highways and open fields, they filled the whole island with the fame of their virtues, their learning, and eloquence; confirmed the orthodox in their faith; and reclaimed many of the Pelagians from their errors. The champions of Pelagianism were at first dispirited, and declined the combat; but seeing themselves in danger of losing all their reputation, and all their followers, they took heart, and challenged their formidable adversaries to a public disputation. This challenge was joyfully accepted by Germanus and Lupus, and both parties came to the field of battle (which was probably at Verulamium) attended by a numerous train of their

\* Some evil spirits (says Bede) being dispossessed by the exorcists, were constrained to tell the story of the tempest, and the approach of the bishops.

friends and followers ; and a prodigious multitude of other people came also to the place, to hear and judge for themselves, on which side the truth lay. The external appearances and real characters of the two contending parties at this famous congress, it is said, were very different. The Pelagian champions and their chief followers were richly dressed, and full of pride and presumptuous confidence in their own abilities ; the two bishops and their attendants were very plain in their attire, diffident of themselves, and devoutly depending on divine assistance. The Pelagian orators opened the debate, and spent a great deal of time in making an ostentatious display of their eloquence, and in long rhetorical speeches, which contained little solid argument, and produced no conviction. When they had finished their harangues, the venerable prelates stood up, and poured forth such an irresistible torrent of arguments from Scripture, reason, and the testimonies of authors, as quite confounded and silenced their adversaries, and fully convinced their hearers. The surrounding multitudes testified their assent and approbation by the loudest acclamations, and were with great difficulty restrained from knocking the Pelagian champions on the head.\*

Germanus and Lupus continued some time in Britain after they obtained this complete victory over the Pelagians, confirming the British Chris-

Germanus  
and Lu-  
pus, hav-  
ing finished

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 17.



their work  
in Britain,  
return into  
Gaul.

tians in the right faith by their reasoning and preaching, and (as the monkish historians tell us) by their miracles. Germanus had, it seems, brought with him a very large and valuable cargo of relics of all the apostles, and of many martyrs, which he deposited in the tomb of St. Alban the proto-martyr of Britain. This precious hoard was opened some ages after in the presence of King Offa, and all the relics were found very fresh and in good keeping, and proved a very valuable treasure to the monks of St. Albans.\* They did not indeed enjoy this treasure without rivals; for the monks of St. Pantaleon at Cologn affirmed, that St Germanus was so far from leaving any relics in Britain, that he brought away with him from thence the body of St. Alban, which he deposited at Rome, and which was from thence transferred to their monastery by the Empress Theophania, A. D. 986. To demonstrate the truth of this assertion, they produced the body of the holy martyr, far fresher, and in much better condition, than that at St. Albans in England.† Such were the gross and monstrous frauds of the monks of the middle ages, to deceive the world and enrich themselves! Germanus and Lupus having at length finished the work for which they had come into Britain, prepared to return into Gaul, when they were detained some time

\* Math. Florileg. Hist. ad annum 794.

† Surius Vita Sanctor. Jan. 28. tom. 3.



longer by a very strange accident. The devil, being very much provoked at Germanus for the defeat of his friends the Pelagians, laid a snare for him, and the saint falling into it, strained his foot. This was a piece of very ill-judged malice, by which the devil did his friends no service; as it gave Germanus an opportunity of working a great many more miracles. The Scots and Picts, who had no hand in the saint's misfortune, suffered greatly from it. For these two nations happening to invade South Britain in this interval, they were totally and shamefully defeated by Germanus at the head of the British army, merely by crying out Alleluja three or four times, in which cry he was joined by all his troops. At last, the two good bishops having triumphed over both the spiritual and carnal enemies of the Britons, set sail for Gaul, and by their own merits, and the intercession of St. Alban, who was much pleased with the compliment of the relics he had received from them, they obtained a safe and pleasant passage.\* The reader cannot fail to observe, that this account of Germanus's first expedition into Britain, which is taken from venerable Bede, one of the best and most learned of our monkish historians, makes a ridiculous appearance, through that tincture of the marvellous which runs through it. But it would have appeared ten times more ridiculous, if all the wonderful cir-

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 19, 20.

cumstances which are mentioned by that author and other monks, had been inserted. This prodigious delight in mixing marvellous legends with all their narrations relating to religion and the saints, was the reigning taste of those dark ages, from which the most upright and intelligent writers could not emancipate themselves. Nor does this very much impair their credit, or diminish their use, since it is not, for the most part, very difficult to distinguish what is legendary from what is true, or at least probable, in their narrations.

Second  
expedition  
of Germanus  
into  
Britain.

Though the advocates for the Pelagian opinions had been silenced by the arguments, or intimidated by the authority of Germanus and Lupus, yet it plainly appears that they had not been convinced. For these two prelates were no sooner gone, than they began to propagate their heretical notions with as much zeal, and, which is more surprising, with as much success as ever. Nor had the orthodox clergy profited so much by the instructions of their late venerable coadjutors, as to be able to defend their own cause, but were obliged to apply to them a second time for their assistance. The wretched Britons, in this period, seem to have been sunk into such a state of imbecility in their minds, as well as bodies, that they could make as little resistance against their spiritual as against their secular enemies. Germanus having heard of the distress of his friends, and danger of the orthodox faith, hastened to their relief and support, ac-

accompanied by Severus bishop of Treves, a disciple of his former companion Lupus. The two bishops, at their arrival, were pleased to find that the defection from the right faith had not been so great as they had apprehended ; and immediately applied themselves with great zeal to accomplish the design of their mission. For this purpose, they preached and reasoned with great eloquence and power (to say nothing of their working miracles), and thereby reclaimed such as had apostatized, and confirmed those who were wavering. On this occasion, however, these good bishops did not think fit to depend entirely on the efficacy of their spiritual weapons, but called in the assistance of the secular arm, and procured the banishment of the chief Pelagians out of the island. By these means the orthodox faith was restored, and remained, for a long time, pure and inviolated.\*

It is a little strange that these two expeditions of Germanus into Britain are not mentioned by Gildas, the most ancient of our historians, who flourished only about a century after. This must be owing either to his intended brevity, or imperfect information. For as they are related at great length by Constantius, a monk of Auxerre, who wrote the life of Germanus, not many years after his death, we have little reason to doubt of their reality.† There are also great diversity

\* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 21.

† Id. l. 1. c. 17. not. 1. by Dr Smith.

of opinions about the particular years in which these expeditions happened. It is sufficient to say, that they must have happened some time between the departure of the Romans and the arrival of the Saxons. For Germanus became bishop of Auxerre, A. D. 418, a very few years before the final departure of the Romans, and died A. D. 448, only one year before the arrival of the Saxons.\* This last event produced a melancholy revolution in the state of religion in Britain, which, together with the conversion of the Saxons to the Christian Religion, and their church history, will be the subject of the second chapter of the second book of this work.

\* Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 209. Usser. primord. Eccles. Britan. p. 382.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

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BOOK I.

CHAP. III.

THE HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION, GOVERNMENT,  
AND LAWS OF GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE FIRST IN-  
VASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS UNDER JULIUS CÆSAR,  
A. A. C. 55, TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAXONS, A. D.  
449.

SECTION I.

*A brief Account of the Names, Situations, Limits, and other  
Circumstances of the several Nations which inhabited Great  
Britain before it was invaded and conquered by the Ro-  
mans; and of the Changes that were made in the State of  
these Nations, and of their Country, by that Conquest.*

NEXT to the laws and sanctions of religion, The great influence of laws on manners  
those of civil government have the greatest  
influence on the manners and characters of  
nations, as well as on their fortunes and ex-



ternal circumstances. On the one hand, wise and equitable laws, a mild, prudent, and steady administration, contribute very much to render a people wise and virtuous, as well as great and happy: on the other hand, unjust and oppressive constitutions, a cruel and despotic exercise of authority, tend as much to debase their minds as to depress their fortunes, to make them worthless as to make them wretched. It is impossible therefore to form just ideas of the character and manners of any people, in any period of their history, or to account for them, without an attentive investigation of the constitution of their government, the nature and spirit of their laws, the forms of their judicial proceedings, and other particulars of their police. For these are the great hinges on which both the characters and fortunes of nations have always turned. Whenever any remarkable revolution hath happened in the constitution and government of any people, either for the better or the worse, that revolution hath always been attended, or very soon followed, by a proportional change in the spirit, character, and manners of that people. The truth of these observations might be demonstrated, if it were necessary, by examples out of the history of every nation. On this account, and for several other reasons, we have devoted the third chapter of every book of this work to a brief, but careful investigation of the constitution, government, and laws of the inhabitants of Great Britain, in the several successive periods of their history.

The fathers and heads of families were the first sovereigns, and the patriarchal was the most ancient form of government amongst mankind.

The first form of government patriarchal.

This is so evident, from the whole strain of ancient history, so agreeable to reason and the natural course of things, and so universally acknowledged, that it is quite unnecessary to spend any time in proving it. \* The first states or civil societies, therefore, in every country, were no other than large families, clans, or tribes, consisting of brothers, sisters, cousins, and other near relations, living in the same district, under the protection and government of their common parent, or of his representative, the head of the tribe or family. In these small patriarchal states there was little need of positive laws to limit the authority of the sovereign, or secure the obedience of the subjects. The strong ties of nature, and the warm feelings of mutual affection, supplied the place of laws on both sides. The patriarchal sovereign, viewing his subjects as his family, his dearest friends, and near relations, exercised his authority with mildness; and the subjects, looking upon their sovereign as their parent, the chief and head of their family, whose honour and interest were inseparable from their own, obeyed with cheerfulness.

But this patriarchal government, in its most pure and simple form, was probably not of very

Succeeded by the monarchical.

\* Origin of Laws, &c. v. 1. p. 10, 11. Gen. c. 38. Hom. Odyss. l. 9. v. 107. and Plato de Leg. l. 3. p. 806.

long continuance in any country. For as these distinct and independent tribes became each more and more numerous, they gradually approached nearer to one another; disputes arose between them, about their limits, their properties, the honour and dignity of their chiefs, and many other things. These disputes produced wars; and each of the contending clans, in order to defend themselves and annoy their enemies, contracted the most intimate alliances with one or more neighbouring clans, which were thereby, in a little time, consolidated into one large society or state. In this manner, and perhaps in several other ways, a great number of petty states or kingdoms were formed in almost every country with whose history we are acquainted. These ancient kingdoms consisted of two, three, four, or more tribes or clanships, under one king, who was commonly the head of the chief clan of which the state was composed; while each of the heads of the other tribes still retained a great degree of authority in his own tribe.

Many small kingdoms in Britain when invaded by the Romans.

This seems to have been the state of society and government, both in Gaul and Britain, when they were first invaded by the Romans. Both these countries were then possessed by many petty states, governed by kings, or chief magistrates under some other denomination, independent of, and for the most part at war with, one another. In each of these little states or kingdoms there were several chieftains, who governed each his

own tribe with a kind of subordinate authority. With respect to Gaul, while Tacitus tells us, that it was inhabited by sixty-four different states, Appian assures us, that it contained no fewer than four hundred different nations.\* These two accounts are not really contradictory; as the former respects the kingdoms, and the latter the tribes of which these kingdoms were composed. According to this proportion of sixty-four kingdoms, and four hundred tribes, each of these Gaulish kingdoms, one with another, contained about six tribes or clanships. Britain was in the same condition when it was first invaded by the Romans; containing many independent states, each composed of several tribes or clanships. Of this it will be sufficient to give one decisive proof. When Cæsar invaded Britain, the Cantii, or people of Kent, formed one of the British kingdoms; and yet that illustrious writer mentions no fewer than four kings in Kent at the same time, which could be no other than the chieftains or heads of so many clans or families, of which that little kingdom was composed. †

Before we proceed to speak of the constitution and laws of these ancient British kingdoms, it may not be improper to give a very brief description of them; pointing out the situation, limits, and chief places in each of them, with the time and manner in which they ceased to be independ-

Description of these kingdoms.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 3. c. 44. Appian. de Bel. civil. Pop. Rom. l. 2. p. 71.

† Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 18.



ent states, and fell under the dominion of the Romans. This will enable us to form distinct ideas of the political state of our country when it was invaded by the Romans, and of the changes which were made in it by that invasion. In giving this description, we shall begin at the south-west point of Britain, and proceed to its north-east extremity.

**Danmonii.** 1. The Danmonii inhabited the south-west parts of Britain. The name of this ancient British nation is differently written by different authors. By Solinus they are called Dumnani; by Ravennas, Domnii; and by Ptolemy, Danmonii; and all the conjectures that have been made concerning the derivation of these names are vague and uncertain.\* The Danmonii seem to have inhabited that tract of country which is now called Cornwall and Devonshire, bounded on the south by the British Ocean, on the west by St George's Channel, on the north by the Severn Sea, and on the east by the country of the Durotriges.† Some other British tribes were also seated within these limits; as the Cossini and Ostidamnii, which were probably particular clans of the Danmonii; and, according to Mr Baxter, they were the keepers of their flocks and herds.‡ As the several tribes of the Danmonii submitted without much resistance to the Romans, and never joined in any revolt against them, that people

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 108.

† Camb. Brit. p. 2.

‡ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 190.



were under no necessity of building many forts, or keeping many garrisons in their country. This is the reason why so few Roman antiquities have been found in that country, and so little mention is made of it and its ancient inhabitants by Roman writers. Ptolemy names a few places, both on the seacoasts and in the inland parts of this country, which were known to, and frequented by, the Romans. The most considerable of these places are the two famous promontories of Bolerium and Ocrinum, now the Landsend and the Lizard; and the towns of Isca Danmoniorum and Tamare, now Exeter and Saltash.\* As the Danmonii submitted so tamely to the Romans, they might perhaps permit them to live, for some time at least, under their own princes and their own laws; a privilege which we know they granted to some other British states. In the most perfect state of the Roman government in Britain, the country of the Danmonii made a part of the province called Flavia Cæsariensis, and was governed by the president of that province. After the departure of the Romans, kingly government was immediately revived amongst the Danmonii in the person of Vortigern, who was perhaps descended from the race of their ancient princes, as his name signifies in the British language a chieftain, or the head of a family.

\* See Appendix.

Durotri-  
ges.

2. The Durotriges were seated next to the Danmonii, on the east side, and possessed that country which is now called Dorsetshire. \* The name of this ancient British nation is evidently derived from the two British words Dur, water, and Trigo, to dwell : and it is no less evident, that they got their name from the situation of their country, which lies along the seacoast. It is not very certain whether the Durotriges formed an independent state under a prince of their own, or were united with their neighbours the Danmonii; as they were reduced by Vespasian under the dominion of the Romans, at the same time, and with the same ease, and never revolted. † The peaceable disposition of the inhabitants was probably the reason that the Romans had so few towns, forts, and garrisons in this pleasant country. Dorchester, its present capital, seems to have been a Roman city of some consideration, though our antiquaries are not agreed about its Roman name. It is most probable that it was the Durnovia in the 12th Iter of Antoninus. Many Roman coins have been found at Dorchester; the military way, called Jeening-Street, passed through it; and some vestiges of the ancient stone wall with which it was surrounded, and of the amphitheatre with which it was adorned, are still visible. ‡ The country of the Durotriges was included in the Roman province called Flavia

\* Camd. Brit. p. 51.

† Eutrop. l. 5. c. 8.

‡ Stukely Itin. curios. p. 153, 154, &c.

Cæsariensis, and governed by the president of that province, as long as the Romans kept any footing in these parts.

3. To the east of the Durotriges, on the same <sup>Belgæ.</sup> coast, were seated the Belgæ, who inhabited the countries now called Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire.\* When Cæsar invaded Britain, some part of this country was possessed by the Segontiaci, whose chief town was Winchester, called by the Britons *Caer-seguent*, from the name of these its ancient inhabitants.† But this people seem to have been soon after subdued by, and incorporated with, the Belgæ, as they are never afterwards mentioned. The name of the Belgæ discovers their origin, and demonstrates that they were a colony of that great and powerful nation of the same name, who inhabited a great part of Gaul, and are described by Cæsar in the beginning of his Commentaries. There are many arguments to prove, that all the ancient inhabitants of Britain originally came from Gaul, at different times, and under many different leaders; and that as one wave impels another towards the shore, so these successive colonies drove each other further and further north, till the whole island was peopled. But the time and other circumstances of the arrival of these first colonies in this island are buried in the impenetrable shades of antiquity, except a few of the latest of them, who settled here not very long before the Roman

\* Camb. Brit. p. 67.

† Musgrave Belg. Brit. p. 42.

invasion. With respect to these last colonies who inhabited the south parts of Britain, we have the express testimony of Cæsar that they came from Gaul. “The seacoast of Britain is peopled with  
 “Belgians, drawn thither by the love of war  
 “and plunder. These last passing over from  
 “different parts, and settling in the country,  
 “still retain the names of the several states from  
 “whence they are descended.”\* The latest of these Belgic colonies came into Britain only a few years before Cæsar’s invasion. This colony was conducted by Divitiacus, King of the Suessiones, one of the most powerful of the Belgic nations in Gaul; and, having obtained a footing on the British coast, he continued to reign over our Belgæ in this island, as well as over his ancient subjects on the Continent.† He was succeeded in his Continental territories by Galba, and in his British dominions by another of his sons, perhaps Segonax, who attempted to destroy Cæsar’s fleet.‡ Though the Segontiaci submitted to Cæsar, we hear nothing of the submission of the Belgæ to that conqueror. The honour of subduing that British nation was reserved to Vespasian, who, landing an army in these parts, A. D. 49, fought thirty-two battles, took more than twenty towns, subdued two very powerful nations (one of which was the Belgæ) and the Isle of Wight.§ After this time the

\* Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 10.

† Id. l. 2. c. 9.

‡ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 214.

§ Sueton. in vita Vespas.



country of the Belgæ was much frequented by the Romans, who made in it many excellent military ways, and built several beautiful towns, which are mentioned both by Ptolemy and Antoninus. \* The most remarkable of these towns were Venta Belgarium, Winchester, famous for the imperial weavery which was there established; and Aquæ Solis, Bath, even then renowned for its warm and salutary springs. The country of the Belgæ was also included in the Roman province called Flavia Cæsariensis, and governed by the president of that province and his inferior officers.

4. To the north-east of the Belgæ were seated <sup>Bibroci.</sup> the Bibroci, who inhabited that country, or at least a part of it, which is now called Berkshire. † The name of this people leads us to the discovery of their origin, as well as of the place of their residence in this island. For they certainly came from that part of Gaul where the town called Bibrax was situated, which belonged to the Rhemi, and was attacked with so much fury by the other Belgic nations, because it had declared for Cæsar. ‡ It is not certainly known when this colony of the Bibroci left their native country and settled in Britain; though it is probable that it was not very long before Cæsar's invasion, to whom, perhaps, they were engaged to submit by the influence and example of their friends and countrymen in Gaul. As the Bibroci were but

\* See Appendix.—Musgrave's Belgic. Brit. c. 4, 5, 6.

† Baxt. Gloss. p. 41. Camd. Brit. p. 170.

‡ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 2. c. 7.



a small nation, they seem to have been subdued by some of their neighbours, before the invasion under Claudius, which is the reason they are no further mentioned in history. The name of the hundred of Bray in Berkshire is evidently derived from the name of these ancient inhabitants; as the ancient Bibracte in France now bears the same name of Bray.

*Attrebatii.*

5. The *Attrebatii* were seated next to the *Bibroci*, in part of Berkshire and part of Oxfordshire.\* This was one of those Belgic colonies which had come out of Gaul into Britain, and there retained their ancient name; for the *Attrebatii* were a tribe of the Belgæ, who inhabited that country which is now called Artois. They are mentioned by Cæsar among the nations which composed the Belgic confederacy against him; and the quota of troops which they engaged to furnish on that occasion was fifteen thousand.† *Comius* of Arras was a king or chieftain among the *Attrebatii* in Gaul in Cæsar's time, and he seems to have possessed some authority, or at least some influence, over our *Attrebatii* in Britain; for he was sent by Cæsar to persuade them to submission.‡ This circumstance makes it probable that this colony of the *Attrebatii* had not been settled in Britain very long before that time. The *Attrebatii* were among those British tribes which submitted to Cæsar; nor do we hear of

\* Buxt. Gloss. p. 27.

† Cæs. Bel. Gal.

‡ Id. l. 4. c. 19.

any remarkable resistance they made against the Romans at their next invasion under Claudius. It is indeed probable, that before the time of this second invasion, they had been subdued by some of the neighbouring states, perhaps by the powerful nation of the Cattivellauni, which may be the reason they are so little mentioned in history. Calliva Attrebatum, mentioned in the seventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth Itinera of Antoninus, and called by Ptolemy Calcuæ, seems to have been the capital of the Attrebatii; though our antiquaries differ in their sentiments about the situation of this ancient city, some of them placing it at Wallingford, and others at Ilchester.\* It is not very certain, whether the country of the Bibroci and the Attrebatii was within the Roman province called Britannia Prima, or in that called Flavia Cæsariensis, though it seems most probable that it was in the last of these provinces.

6. Before we leave these parts and return to Ancalites. the seacoast, it may be proper to observe, that the people called Ancalites were seated near the Attrebatii, and were probably a clan of that nation. Mr Baxter thinks they were the Ceangi, or herdsmen and shepherds of the Attrebatii, and possessed those parts of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire which were most proper for pasturage.† After they were subdued by the Romans,

\* Camd. Brit. p. 164. Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 556.

† Baxt. Gloss. p. 14.

the government of them, with that of some other neighbouring states, was bestowed upon Cogidunus, the British king of the Dobuni, as a reward for his early submission and great fidelity to the Romans.

Regni.

7. To the east of the Belgæ, and to the south of the Attrebatii, were seated the Regni, in the country now called Surrey and Sussex. \* As this people possessed so large a tract of the seacoast in the south of this island, it is highly probable they had come from the Continent and settled here not very long before the Roman invasion, perhaps at the same time with their neighbours the Belgæ. For the Belgæ and the Regni had been near neighbours on the Continent; the one having come from the country of the Suessiones, now Soissons; and the other from the country of the Rhemi, now Rheims. The Regni, like all the other Belgic Britons, early submitted to the Roman power, and continued steady in their obedience, without engaging in any revolt. We know not who was sovereign of the Regni when they submitted to the Romans; but soon after their submission they were put under the government of Cogidunus, king of the Dobuni. For this prince, who was then very young, had got so much into the favour of the Emperor Claudius and his ministers, that he was not only allowed to keep his own dominions, but he had several other neighbouring states put under his autho-

\* Camd. Brit. p. 179.

rity.\* It seems probable, from a famous inscription discovered at Chichester, that Cogidunus governed the Regni, in quality of the Emperor's lieutenant, or *legatus Augusti*; for on that inscription he is so styled. † He continued a faithful and useful friend and ally to the Romans above sixty years, which so endeared him to that people, that, according to their custom in other countries, they permitted his posterity to succeed him, perhaps for several generations. ‡ Though the Regni, therefore, were very early and very obedient subjects of the Roman empire, yet as they were long after under the immediate government of British princes, few of the Romans seem to have settled amongst them. This is certainly the reason that we meet with so few vestiges of that great and active people in those countries, which were anciently inhabited by the Regni. Chichester was certainly a considerable place in the Roman times, and probably the capital of the Regni, from whence it was called *Regnum* by the Romans. § The *Neomagus* of Ptolemy, and the *Noviomagus* of the Itinerary, was a city of the Regni, and most probably situated at or near Croydon. || In the most perfect state of the Roman government in Britain, the country of the Regni made a part of the province called *Flavia Cæsariensis*, and was governed by the president of that province.

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 14.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 552.

‡ Stilling. Orig. Brit. p. 62, 63.

§ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 411.

|| Id. p. 425.

Cantii.

8. Next to the Regni eastward were seated the Cantii, inhabiting that country which from them was anciently called Cantium, now Kent.\* The name of this country and of its inhabitants was most probably derived from the British word Cant, which signifies an angle or corner.† It is highly probable, that this was the first district in Britain which received a colony from the Continent; and that it had frequently changed its masters, by new colonies coming over from time to time, and driving the inhabitants further north. In the midst of all these revolutions it still retained its ancient name (which was so agreeable to its shape and situation), and gave the same name to all the successive tribes by which it was inhabited. Those who possessed it at the time of the first Roman invasion were evidently of Belgic origin, and had come over so lately, that they differed in nothing from their countrymen on the Continent. “The inhabitants of Kent (says Cæsar) are the most civilized of all the Britons, and differ but very little in their manners from the Gauls.”‡ This great resemblance between the people of Kent and their neighbours on the Continent, might be partly owing to the situation of their country, which, being nearest to the Continent, was most frequented by strangers from thence. It was this situation also which exposed them to

\* Camd. Brit. p. 215.

† Baxl. Gloss, p. 66.

‡ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5, c. 10.



the first assaults of the Romans. For Cæsar, in both his expeditions into this island, landed in Kent; and therefore we may conclude, that the Cantii had a great share in the vigorous opposition that was made to his landing, and in the several battles and skirmishes which were fought against him after his landing; particularly, they made a very bold but unsuccessful attempt upon his naval camp. The Cantii did not make the same vigorous resistance to the Romans on their next invasion in the reign of Claudius. For Aulus Plautius, the Roman general in that expedition, traversed their country without seeing an enemy; and as they now submitted to the power of Rome without a struggle, so they continued in a state of quiet submission to it to the very last.\* The situation of Cantium occasioned its being much frequented by the Romans, who generally took their way through it in their marches to and from the Continent. Few places in Britain are more frequently mentioned by the Roman writers, than Rutupium and Portus Rutupensis, most probably Richborough and Stonar.† Rutupium was the same in those times, that Dover is in ours, the usual place of embarking for, and landing from, the Continent. Before the final departure of the Romans out of Britain, Portus Dubris, now Dover, had become a considerable place, and a

\* Dio. l. 60.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 13. Lucan, l. 5. v. 67. Juven. Sat. 4. v. 140.

well-frequented harbour, where the third Iter of Antoninus ends, and from whence they often embarked for Gaul. \* Portus Lemanus, supposed to be Lime near West Hythe, was also a noted seaport in these times, and the termination of the fourth Iter of Antoninus. † Durobrivæ and Durovernum, now Rochester and Canterbury, were both Roman towns and stations, and are often mentioned in the Itinerary and other books. ‡ Besides these, there were several other Roman stations, towns, and ports in Cantium, which need not be particularly enumerated here. || Cantium, in the most perfect state of the Roman government, made a part of the province which was called Flavia Cæsariensis.

Trinobantes.

9. The Trinobantes, or Trinouantes, were seated next to the Cantii northward, and inhabited that country which now composes the counties of Essex and Middlesex, and some part of Surrey. § The name of this British nation seems to be derived from the three following British words, Tri, Now, Hant, which signify the inhabitants of the new city. This name was perhaps given them by their neighbours, on account of their having newly come from the Continent into Britain, and having there founded a city called Tri-now, or the New City, the most ancient name of the renowned metropolis of

\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 426.

† Id. Ibid.

‡ Id. p. 424, 425.

|| Id. p. 487. 485.

§ Camd. Brit. p. 363. Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 250.

Britain.\* The Trinobantes had come so lately from Belgium, that they seem hardly to have been firmly established in Britain at the time of the first Roman invasion. For their new city, which soon after became so famous, was then so inconsiderable, that it is not mentioned by Cæsar, though he must have been within sight of the place where it was situated. They were then at war with their neighbours, the Cattivellauni, whose king, Cassibelanus, commanded the confederated Britons against the Romans; and, on this account, the Trinobantes were amongst the first of the British states who deserted that confederacy and submitted to Cæsar.† They submitted again to the Romans, on their next invasion in the reign of Claudius, with the same facility, and almost for the same reason. For, in the interval between the invasion of Julius and that of Claudius, the Cattivellauni had reduced them under their obedience; and, in order to emancipate themselves from this subjection to their neighbours, they put themselves under the protection of the Romans. But the Trinobantes soon became weary of their obedience to their new masters. For the Roman colony at Camulodunum, which was within their territories, depriving some of them of their estates, and oppressing them several other ways, they joined in the great revolt of the Britons under Boadicia,

\* Camd. Brit. p. 565. Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 250.

† Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 16.

and shared very deeply in the miseries of that revolt.\* From that time, the Trinobantes remained in peaceable subjection to the Romans, as long as they continued in Britain. The country of the Trinobantes was greatly valued and much frequented by the Romans, on account of the excellence of its soil and climate, and the many advantages of its situation. That sagacious people soon fixed their eyes on the new town of the Trinobantes; and observing its admirable situation, for health, for pleasure, and for trade, great numbers of them settled in it, and giving it the name of Londinium from its situation, and of Augusta from its grandeur, it became in a little time the largest and most opulent city in this island. In the reign of Nero, as Tacitus informs us, London was become a city highly famous for the great conflux of merchants, her extensive commerce, and plenty of all things.† No fewer than seven of the fourteen journeys of Antoninus begin or end at London; a plain proof, amongst many others, that this city was the capital of Britain in the Roman times, as it is at present the great and flourishing metropolis of the British empire.‡ Camulodunum, now Malden, in Essex, was the seat of the first Roman colony in Britain, and a place of great beauty and magnificence in these times; though at present few or no vestiges of

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 51. Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 153.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 53.

‡ See Appendix.

its ancient grandeur remain.\* Cæsaromagus, from its pompous name, was probably a place of some note in the Roman times; but it is now so entirely ruined, that it is difficult to discover the ground where it once stood; some of our antiquaries placing it at Chelmsford, and others at Dunmow.† The Colonia of Antonius was probably Colchester, and Durolitum, as some think Leiton, but according to others Waltham.‡ But though the county of Essex was certainly very much frequented by the Romans, who erected many noble works in it, yet time, cultivation, and various accidents, have made so great change in the face of that country, that very few vestiges of these works are now remaining. || The territories of the Trinobantes were included in that Roman province which was called Britannia Prima.

10. To the north of the Trinobantes were seated the Cattivellauni, in the country which is now divided into the counties of Hertford, Bedford, and Bucks. § The name of this ancient British people is written in several different ways by Greek and Roman authors, being sometimes called Catti, Cassii, Caticuclani, Catitudani, Catticludeane, &c. That they were of

Cattivel-  
launi.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 26. Camd. Brit. p. 415.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 427. Camd. Brit. p. 410.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 447. Baxt. Gloss. Brit. 116.

|| Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 331.

§ Camd. Brit. p. 326. 335. 343.



Belgic origin cannot be doubted; and it is not improbable that they derived their name of Catti from the Belgic word Katten, which signifies illustrious or noble, and that the addition of Vellauni, which means on the banks of rivers, might be given them after their arrival in Britain, as descriptive of the situation of their country.\* However this may be, the Cattivellauni formed one of the most brave and warlike of the ancient British nations when Cæsar invaded Britain, and long after. Cassibelanus, their prince, was made commander in chief of the confederated Britons, not only on account of his own personal qualities, but also because he was at the head of one of their bravest and most powerful tribes.† In the interval between the departure of Cæsar and the next invasion under Claudius, the Cattivellauni had reduced several of the neighbouring states under their obedience; and they again took the lead in the opposition to the Romans at their second invasion, under their brave but unfortunate prince Caractacus.‡ The country of the Cattivellauni was much frequented and improved by the Romans, after it came under their obedience. Verulamium, their capital, which stood near where St. Albans now stands, became a place of great consideration, was honoured with the name and privileges of a municipium or free city, and had magistrates after the model of the city

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit.

† Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 9.

‡ Dio. l. 60. p. 678. Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 33.

of Rome.\* This place was taken and almost destroyed by the insurgents under Boadicia; but it was afterwards rebuilt, restored to its former splendour, and surrounded with a strong wall, some vestiges of which are still remaining.† Durocibrivæ and Magiovintum, in the second Iter of Antoninus, were probably Dunstable and Fenny Stratford, at which places there appear to have been Roman stations.‡ The Salenæ of Ptolemy, a town in the country of the Cattivellauni, was perhaps situated at Salndy in Bedfordshire, where several Roman antiquities have been found.|| There were, besides these, several other Roman forts, stations, and towns in this country, which it would be tedious to enumerate. The territories of the Cattivellauni made a part of the Roman province called Britannia Prima.

11. Next to the Cattivellauni, westward, were Dobuni. seated the Dobuni, or, as they are named by Dio, the Boduni, in the counties of Oxford and Gloucester. § Both the names of this British nation seem to have been derived from the low situation of a great part of the country which they inhabited: for both Duvn and Bodun signify profound or low, in the ancient language of

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 33. Camd. Brit. p. 351.

† Stukeley It. cur. p. 110.

‡ Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 422.

|| Id. p. 375. Camd. Brit. p. 359.

§ Camd. Brit. p. 267. 291.

Gaul and Britain.\* The Dobuni are not mentioned among the British nations who resisted the Romans under Julius Cæsar, which was probably owing to the distance of their country from the scene of action; and before the next invasion under Claudius, they had been so much oppressed by their ambitious neighbours the Cattivellauni, that they submitted with pleasure to the Romans, in order to be delivered from that oppression. Cogidunus, who was at that time (as his name imports) Prince of the Dobuni, recommended himself so effectually to the favour of the Emperor Claudius, by his ready submission, and other means, that he was not only continued in the government of his own territories, but had some other states put under his authority.† This prince lived so long, and remained so steady a friend and ally to the Romans, that his subjects, being habituated to their obedience in his time, never revolted, nor stood in need of many forts or forces to keep them in subjection. This is certainly the reason that we meet with so few Roman towns and stations in the country anciently inhabited by the Dobuni. The Duro-cornovium of Antoninus, and the Corinium of Ptolemy, are believed by antiquaries to have been the same place, the capital of the Dobuni, and situated at Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, where there are many marks of a Roman sta-

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 42. 106.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 14.

tion.\* Clevum or Glevum, in the thirteenth Iter of Antoninus, stood where the city of Gloucester now stands: and Abone, in the fourteenth Iter, was probably situated at Avinton on the Severn.† The country of the Dobuni was comprehended in the Roman province Britania Prima.

12. That we may survey all the ancient inhabitants of Wales at the same time, we shall proceed no further westward at present, but return again to the east coast of Britain. Here we meet with the Iceni, an ancient British people who were seated to the north of the Trinobantes, and inhabited that country which is now divided into the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon.‡ This nation is called by several different names by the Greek and Roman writers, as Simeni by Ptolemy, Cenimagni by Cæsar, &c. They do not seem to have made any opposition to the Romans at their first invasion under Cæsar, but made their submission at the same time with several of the neighbouring states. § At the next invasion in the reign of Claudius, the Iceni entered into a voluntary alliance with the Romans; but soon after, joining with some other British tribes in a revolt, they were defeated in a great battle by Ostorius Scapula, the second Roman governor of Britain;

\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 368. 468. Stukeley Iter. cur. p. 62.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 468. Camd. Brit. p. 270.

‡ Camd. Brit. p. 454. 455. 479. 502.

§ Cæs. Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 14.

A.D. 50, and reduced to a state of subjection.\* For some time after this, they were treated with much favour and indulgence by the Romans, and even allowed to live under the immediate government of Prasutagus, their own native sovereign. But after the death of that prince, the Iceni were so much enraged at some grievous insults which were offered to his widow and daughters, by the lust and avarice of certain powerful Romans, that they broke out into a second revolt, much more violent than the first. In this revolt they were commanded by the celebrated Boadicia, the brave and injured widow of their late king; and being joined by several other British states, they did many cruel injuries to the Romans and their allies. But being at length entirely defeated in battle, with prodigious slaughter, by Suetonius Paulinus, A.D. 61, they were reduced to a state of total and final subjection to the Roman government; and the Romans took great pains to keep them in this state of subjection, by building many strong forts, stations, and towns in their country.† The capital of the Iceni, which is called by the Roman writers Venta Icenorum, was situated at Caister, on the banks of the River Wintfar, about three miles from Norwich; where some vestiges of its walls are still discernible.‡ Several of

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 1. c. 51, 52.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 40, 41, 42.

‡ Camd. Brit. p. 460. Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 445, 444.



the Roman stations in the country of the Iceni, are mentioned in the fifth Iter of Antoninus; as Villa Faustini, Iciani, Camboricum, Durolipons, and Durobrivæ; St. Edmundsbury, Ickborough, Chesterford, Waltham, and Caister on the Nen. \* Some other places in the same country are mentioned in the ninth Iter, as Venta Icenorum, Sitomagus, and Combretonium; Caister, Wulpit, and Stretford. † Two places on the sea-coast belonging to the Iceni are mentioned in the Notitia Imperii, Branodunum and Garononum, Brancaster and Yarmouth, in which strong garrisons were kept by the Romans to protect the country from the depredations of the Saxon pirates. ‡ The territories of the Iceni made a part of the Roman province Britannia Prima.

13. To the west and north of the Iceni were Coritani. seated the Coritani or Coriceni, in the country which is now divided into the counties of Northampton, Leicester, Rutland, Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derby. § The name of the Cor-Iceni plainly indicates that there was an affinity or connexion of some kind or other between them and their neighbours the Iceni. Some think they were two tribes of the same nation, and that Cor-Iceni means the lesser Iceni, from Carr, a dwarf, and Iceni. || Others imagine that both

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 250. 158. 63. 115. 111.

† Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 444.

‡ Id. p. 488.

§ Camd. Brit. p. 511. 550. 543. 550. 575. 586.

|| Boxhorn. Lexicon Brit. Lat. p. 17.

these British tribes derived their names from the different kinds of animals, in which their chief riches consisted, and the tending of which was their chief employment ; the Iceni, from Ychen, oxen, and the Cor-Iceni, from Cor, a sheep. \* However this may be, it is very evident, that if these two tribes did not form one nation, they were at least in very strict alliance, and shared the same fate, having both been reduced to some degree of subjection to the Romans by Ostorius Scapula, and totally subdued by Suetonius Paulinus. † The Romans made great changes in the country of the Cor-Iceni, by introducing agriculture, and by building many forts and stations in it, to keep them in subjection. Lindum, now Lincoln, the ancient capital of the Cor-Iceni, became the seat of a Roman colony, and one of the most considerable cities which that people had in Britain; and is mentioned both by Ptolemy, and by Antoninus in several of his journies. ‡ By following only the course of the sixth journey of Antoninus, from London to Lincoln, we meet with a considerable number of Roman towns and stations within the territories of the Cor-Iceni; as Venonæ, now Cleycester; Rataë, now Leicester; Virometum, now Willoughby; Margidunum, now East-Bridgeford; Ad-Pontem, now Southwell; and Crocolana, now Brugh, near Collingham. § The extensive country of the

\* Carte, v. 1. p. 108.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 29, 30.

‡ See Appendix.

§ Hors. Brit. p. 436, 437.

Cor-Iceni was also included in the Roman province called Britannia Prima.

14. To the west of the Cor-Iceni were seated <sup>Cornavii.</sup> the Cornavii, in that country which is now divided into Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire.\* There were several British tribes of this name, in other parts of this island; and they seem all to have been called Cornavii, from the two British words Corn, a horn, and Av, a river, descriptive of the form and situation of their respective countries.† Besides the Cornavii, there was another British tribe or nation seated in the countries above mentioned, and seem to have possessed the best part of the two counties of Warwick and Worcester. This nation is called by Tacitus the Jugantes, by a mistake (as it is thought) of his transcribers, for Wigantes, or Huicii, their real name.‡ The Wigantes (which in the ancient language of Britain signifies brave men) seem to have been an independent nation under their own Prince Venutius, who married the famous Cartesmandua, Queen of the Brigantes.§ But both the Wigantes and Cornavii were in such strict alliance with the Iceni and Cor-Iceni, that they were reduced at the same time, and by the same generals, under the dominion of the Romans.||

\* Camd. Brit. p. 598. 618. 634. 646. 662.

† Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 88, 89, 90, 91.

‡ Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 58.

§ Id. Ibid. Baxt. Glos. Brit. 135.

|| Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 29, 30.

That brave and industrious people built many forts, stations, and towns in the country of the Cornavii and Wigantes, to keep its inhabitants in subjection. As the second journey of Antoninus, from beyond the wall of Severus to Richborough in Kent, passes through this country from north to south, it will conduct us to several of these Roman towns and stations.\* The most northerly of these towns was Condate, supposed to be Northwich in Cheshire.† We come next to Diva, now Chester, which was a city of great consideration in the Roman times, a colony, and the stated quarters of the twentieth legion.‡ Pursuing the same route southward, we meet with the following towns in their order; Bovium, near Stretton; Mediolanum, near Draiton; Rutunium, near Wem; Uriconium, now Wroxeter, the ancient capital of the Cornavii; Uxacona, near Sheriff Hales; Pennocrucium, near the river Penk; Etoce-tum, Wall near Litchfield; and Manduesse-dum, now Manchester in Warwickshire.§ The precise boundaries of the several Roman provinces in Britain are so little known, that we cannot be certain whether the whole country of the Cornavii, and Wigantes, was within the limits of that which was called Britannia Prima, or some part of it belonged to Britannia Secunda. ||

\* See Appendix.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 415.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 416.

§ Id. p. 408. See Appendix.

|| See Appendix.

It is now proper, before we proceed any further northward, to take a short view of that part of South Britain which is now called Wales, and of the several nations by which it was anciently inhabited. These nations were the Silures, the Demetæ, and the Ordovices; of each of which we shall speak in their order.

15. The Silures, besides the two English Silures. counties of Hereford and Monmouth, possessed Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, and Glamorgan-shire, in South Wales.\* The name of this ancient British nation is derived, by some of our antiquaries, from Coil, a wood, and Ures, men, because they inhabited a woody country: and by others, from these British words, Es heuil üir, which signify brave or fierce men.† There seems to be but little probability, not to say evidence, in the conjecture of Tacitus, that the Silures had come originally from Spain; as it is founded on a supposed, and perhaps imaginary resemblance between them and the ancient Spaniards, in their persons and complexions.‡ It is much more probable that they, as well as the other ancient inhabitants of Britain, had come from some part or other of the neighbouring continent of Gaul. But from whencesoever they derived their origin, they reflected no dishonour upon it, as their posterity have not degenerated from them. The

\* Camd. Brit. p. 685.

† Carte Hist. v. 1. p. 108. Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 217.

‡ Tacit. Vita Agric. c. 11.



Silures were unquestionably one of the bravest of the ancient British nations, and defended their country and their liberty against the Romans with the most heroic fortitude. For though they had received a dreadful defeat from Ostorius Scapula, and had lost their renowned commander Caractacus, they still continued undaunted and implacable; and by their bold and frequent attacks, they at length broke the heart of the brave Ostorius.\* But all their efforts were at last in vain. They were repulsed by Aulus Didius, further weakened by Petilius Cerealis, and at last totally subdued by Julius Frontinus, in the reign of Vespasian.† As the Romans had found great difficulty in subduing the Silures, so they took great pains to keep them in subjection, by building strong forts, and planting strong garrisons in their country. One of the most considerable of these fortifications, and the capital of the whole country, was Isca Silurum, now Cearleon, on the river Wisk, in Monmouthshire.‡ Here the second legion of the Romans, which had contributed greatly to the reduction of the Silures, was placed in garrison (as some antiquaries have imagined) by Julius Frontinus, to keep that people in obedience.§ It is however certain, that this legion was very early, and very long, stationed at this place. || Isca Silurum was, in

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 30 to 37.

† Id. c. 31. Id. vita Agric. c. 18.

‡ Camd. Brit. p. 717.

§ Philosoph. Trans. No. 559.

|| See Appendix. Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 73.

the Roman times, a city not only of great strength, but also of great beauty and magnificence. This is evident from the description which is given us of its ruins by Giraldus Cambrensis, in his Topography of Wales, several ages after it had been destroyed and abandoned. “ This (Caer-Leion, or the city of the legion) “ was a very ancient city, enjoying honourable “ privileges, and was elegantly built by the Romans with brick-walls. Many vestiges of its “ ancient splendour are yet remaining : stately “ palaces, which formerly, with their gilded “ tiles, displayed the Roman grandeur. For it “ was first built by the Roman nobility, and “ adorned with sumptuous edifices; also an exceeding high tower, remarkable hot-baths, “ ruins of ancient temples, theatres encompassed “ with stately walls, partly yet standing. Subterraneous edifices are frequently met with “ not only within the walls (which are about “ three miles in circumference) but also in the “ suburbs; as aqueducts, vaults, hypocausts, “ stoves,” &c.\* This description of Caer-Leion was composed in the twelfth century, and therefore we have no reason to be surprised that its very ruins are now so entirely destroyed, that they are hardly discernible. On the banks of the river Wisk, besides Isca Silurum, there stood two other Roman towns; Burrium, now Usk, and Gobannium, now Abergavenny.†

\* Girald. Cambren. Itinerar. Camd. p. 836.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 465. Camd. Brit. 715. 717.

Venta Silurum, now *Caer-Guent*, near *Chepstow* in *Monmouthshire*, was also a considerable Roman town, of which there are some faint vestiges still remaining.\* *Blestum*, in the thirteenth journey of *Antoninus*, is supposed to have been situated at *Monmouth*; and *Magna*, in the twelfth journey, at *Kenchester*, or, as others think, at *Lidbury*, in *Herefordshire*.† When the Roman territories in Britain were divided into five provinces, the greatest part of the country of the *Silures* was in that province which was called *Britannia Secunda*.‡

*Demetæ*,

16. The *Demetæ*, according to *Ptolemy*, were seated next to the *Silures*, and possessed the remaining part of *South Wales*, which is now divided into *Caermarthenshire*, *Pembrokeshire*, and *Cardiganshire*.§ This country is called, by some of the most ancient of our monkish writers, *Demetia*, from the name of its inhabitants; and it is not improbable, that both they and their country derived their name from *Deveit*, which signifies sheep; in which these parts very much abounded.|| As neither *Pliny*, *Tacitus*, nor indeed any ancient writer except *Ptolemy*, mentions any other nation in *South Wales* but the *Silures*, it seems probable that the *Demetæ* were generally considered as a part of that na-

\* *Hors. Brit. Rom.* p. 460.

† *Id.* p. 465. 467. *Baxt. Gloss. Brit.* p. 165.

‡ See Appendix.

§ *Hors. Brit. Rom.* p. 568. *Camd. Brit.* p. 745. 754. 770.

|| *Baxt. Gloss. Brit.* p. 102.

tion, and were perhaps their Cangî, or the keepers of their flocks and herds. If this conjecture is just, the Demetæ were perhaps that nation of Cangians who were subdued by Ostorius Scapula, after he had defeated the Icenî. For the country of these Cangians reached to the Irish sea, which agrees very well with the situation of Demetia.\* As the Demetæ did not resist the Romans with much obstinacy, and as their country lay in a remote corner, and was then, and long after, very wild and uncultivated, it seems to have been but little frequented by these conquerors, who had very few towns or stations within its bounds. As none of the journeys of Antoninus lay through any part of the country of the Demetæ, so no place in that country is mentioned in the Itinerary. Ptolemy takes notice of the promontory Octapitarum, now St. David's Head; of the mouth of the river Tobius, now the river Towy, in Caermarthenshire; and of the towns Leuentium and Maridunum, now Lhan-Dewe-Brevi and Caermardin.† The country of the Demetæ was situated in the Roman province called Britannia Secunda.

17. Next to the Demetæ were seated the Ordovices, in that country which is now called North Wales, and contains the counties of Montgomery, Merioneth, Caernarvon, Denbigh, and Flint.‡ These Ordovices, or (as they are called

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 53.

† See Appendix.

‡ Camd. Brit. p. 778. 785. 794. 814. 822.

by Tacitus) Ordeuices, are supposed to have been originally of the same tribe or nation with the Huicii of Warwickshire, who were under some kind of subjection to the Cornavii; but the Huicii of North Wales, being a free and independent people, were called Ordh-Huici, or the free Huici.\* When they were invaded by the Romans, they shewed a spirit worthy of their name, and fought with great bravery in defence of their freedom and independency. Though they received a great defeat from the Roman general Ostorius, in conjunction with the Silures, they maintained the war for a considerable time, until they were finally subdued, with great slaughter by the renowned Agricola.† It was probably owing to the nature of the country, and to the vicinity of Diva, now Chester, where a whole legion was quartered, that the Romans had so few towns or stations in the territories of the Ordevices. Mediolanium, which is mentioned by Ptolemy, was the capital of the nation, and was probably situated at Maywood, in Montgomeryshire.‡ It was a place of some consideration in the Roman times, but was afterwards quite demolished by Edwin, King of Northumberland.§ Besides this, the Romans had a few other towns in this country; as Segontium, now Caernarvon, Conovium, now Conway,

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 189.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 31. Vita Agric. c. 15.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 372.

§ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 175.



and Varæ, now Bodvary ; which are all mentioned in the eleventh journey of Antoninus. \* The country of the Ordovices was comprehended in the Roman province which was called Britannia Secunda.

Before we leave this part of Britain, to return to the eastern coasts, it may not be improper to take some notice of two ancient British nations, the Cangi and Attacotti, which some of our antiquaries believe to have been seated in these parts, though we cannot perhaps discover with certainty their real situation.

18. Our antiquaries have been much perplexed <sup>Cangi.</sup> about the situation of the Cangi, Ceangi, or Cangani, which are all the same people. Camden discovered some traces of them in many different and distant places, as in Somersetshire, Wales, Derbyshire, and Cheshire ; and he might have found as plain vestiges of them in Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Essex, Wiltshire, &c. † Mr Horsley and others are no less perplexed and undetermined in their opinions on this subject. ‡ But Mr Baxter seems to have discovered the true cause of all this perplexity, by observing that the Cangi or Ceangi were not a distinct nation seated in one particular place, but such of the youth of many different nations as were employed in pasturage, in feeding the flocks and herds of their

\* See Appendix.

† Camd. Brit. p. 85. 216. 456. Spelm. Villare Anglican. v. Can.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 51. 54, 55.

respective tribes. Almost all the ancient nations of Britain had their Ceangi, their pastoritia pubes, the keepers of their flocks and herds, who ranged about the country in great numbers, as they were invited by the season, and plenty of pasture for their cattle. This is the reason that vestiges of their name are to be found in so many different parts of Britain; but chiefly in those parts which are most fit for pasturage.\* These Ceangi of the different British nations, naturally brave, and rendered still more hardy by their way of life, were constantly armed for the protection of their flocks from wild beasts; and these arms they occasionally employed in the defence of their country and their liberty.

Attacotti.

19. The Attacotti are mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus and St Jerome, as well as in the *Notitia Imperii*.† They are supposed by some antiquaries to have inhabited Wales; and as a proof of this, they say that their name was derived from the British words *At a coit*, which signify *Amongst woods*.‡ This derivation of their name is certainly but a very weak argument that they inhabited Wales; because several other regions in Britain, in these times, abounded as much in woods as that country. It seems probable that the Attacotti were seated somewhere further north than any part of Wales. For they

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 75, 74, 75, 76.

† Ammian. Marcell. l. 27. c. 8. Hieronym. l. 2. contra Jovianum.

‡ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 26, 27.

are represented by Ammianus Marcellinus as allies and confederates of the Scots and Picts, and therefore probably their neighbours. “The Saxons and Franks (says the historian) ravaged those parts of Britain which lay nearest to Gaul. The Picts, Attacots and Scots, over-ran, plundered, and laid waste several other parts.” But these Attacots were such horrid savages, as we shall have occasion to observe in another place, that it is needless to spend any more time in inquiring where they were seated.\*

20. It is now time to return to the eastern <sup>Parisi.</sup> coasts of Britain, where we meet with the Parisi, who were seated to the north of the Coritani, and possessed that district which is called Holderness, or (as Mr Camden imagines) the whole east-riding of Yorkshire.† The Parisi are supposed to have derived their name from the two British words Paur Isa, which signify low pasture, and which are descriptive of the situation and use of their country.‡ It is uncertain whether the Parisi in Britain were a colony of the Parisi in Gaul, or had only obtained a similar name, from a similarity of situation. However this may be, it is evident that our Parisi never attained to any great degree of power or consequence; but were always subject to the authority, and followed the fate of their more powerful neighbours, the Brigantes. For this reason, it is not necessary to be

\* See chap. vii. Dr Macpherson's Dissertations in the Preface.

† Camd. Brit. p. 885.

‡ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 191.

more particular in our description of them or their country.

Brigantes. 21. To the north of the Parisi and Cornavii were seated the Brigantes, the most numerous, powerful, and ancient of the British nations. Their territories reached from sea to sea quite cross the island, and comprehended that large tract of country which is now divided into Yorkshire and the county of Durham on the east coast, and Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland on the west.\* The Brigantes are thought to have been descended from the ancient Phrygians, who were the very first inhabitants of Europe, and to have come over into this island from the coast of Gaul, before the Belgæ arrived in that country. To confirm this conjecture, it is pretended that these tribes of Phrygians, who peopled the sea-coasts of so many countries, were known by many different names, which had all some affinity, and, amongst others, by this name of Brigantes, of which there are some traces still remaining in almost every country in Europe.† However this may be, it is certain that they were seated in this island in very ancient times, and esteemed themselves the aborigines, or first inhabitants of it. The Brigantes were not in the least affected by the incursion of the Romans under Julius Cæsar. Seneca, in the verses

\* Camd. Brit. p. 842. 951. 962. 983. 1002.

† Eaxt. Gloss. Brit. voce Brigantes. Carte Hist. Eng. v. 1. p. 10. 18.

quoted below, \* insinuates that they were subdued by the Emperor Claudius. But in this, it is probable, there was more of poetical compliment than truth. It appears, however, that this state very soon contracted some alliance with, or made some kind of submission to, the Romans. For when Ostorius, the Roman governor, had defeated the Iceni, and was marching his army into the west against the Cangi, he was called away by the news of an insurrection among the Brigantes, which he soon quieted. † But it also appears, that this people were some time after this governed by their own princes, particularly by the famous Cartimandua, who was a faithful and useful ally to the Romans. ‡ The Brigantes having broken off their engagements with the Romans, of whatever kind they were, and commenced hostilities against them in the beginning of Vespasian's reign, A.D. 70, they were in part subdued by Petilius Cerialis, then governor of Britain, and soon after totally reduced by the renowned Agricola. § The country of the Brigantes composed almost the whole of the fourth Roman province in Britain, called Maxima Cæsariensis, and was governed by the consular president of that province. As this, for the greatest

\* . . . . . Ille Britannos

Ultro noti littora ponti, et cœruleos

Scuta Brigantes, dare Romulæis colla catenis

Jussit.—Seneca in *Ludo*.

† Tacit. *Annal.* l. 12. c. 32.

‡ *Id.* l. 12. c. 36.

§ Tacit. *Vita Agric.* c. 17. 20.



part of the Roman times, was a frontier province, it was much frequented, and carefully guarded by that illustrious people; so that to give the shortest possible account of the prodigious number of their castles, towns, cities, and of the other works executed by them in it, for use, ornament, and defence, would draw out this paragraph to a tedious and disproportionate length. It is necessary, therefore, to refer the reader, for satisfaction in these particulars, to the Appendix.

Otodini.

21. To the north-east of the Brigantes were seated the Otodini, in the countries now called Northumberland, Merse, and the Lothians.\* As the Otodini are not mentioned by any of the Roman historians, but only by Ptolemy, it is uncertain whether they formed a distinct, independent state, or were united with the Brigantes. They were, however, a considerable people, and possessed a long tract of the seacoast, from the river Tine to the Firth of Forth.† Their name is derived by Baxter from the old British words, Ot o dineu, which signify a high and rocky shore; descriptive enough of their country.‡ They were probably reduced by Agricola, at the same time with their more powerful neighbours the Brigantes; but as they lived without the wall of Severus, they were, like the rest of the Mæataë, engaged in frequent revolts. In the most perfect state of the Roman government in

\* Camd. Brit. p. 1066.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 375.

‡ Baxt. Gloss. Antiq. Brit. voce Otodini.

this island, the country of the Otodini made a part of the Roman province called Valentia; which comprehended all that large tract between the two walls. As this province was never long together in the peaceable possession of the Romans, they had but few stations in the country of the Otodini, except those on the line of the wall of Severus, which are described in the Appendix. Besides these, there were two or three Roman towns without the wall, situated on or near the military way which ran through their country into Caledonia; which are mentioned both in Ptolemy and the Itinerary of Antoninus. These towns were Bremenium, now Riechester, and Curia or Corstupitum, now Corbridge.\* Between these two towns, and at a little distance from the military way, at a place now called Risingham, there are very conspicuous vestiges of a Roman station; which, from the inscription of an altar found there, appears to have been named Habitancum.†

22. The Gadeni were seated to the north-west Gadeni. of the Otodini, and possessed the mountainous parts of Northumberland and Tiviotdale. Some imagine that the vestige of their name is still preserved in the names of the river Jed and of the town of Jedburgh, which are both in the country anciently inhabited by the Gadeni.\* The name of this small nation is supposed by Mr

\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 596, 597.

† Id. *ibid.*

† Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 126.

Baxter to have been derived from the British word Gedau, which signifies to fly or wander; but another antiquary, who was no less skilled in the British language, derives it from Gadichin, which signifies thieves or robbers.\* As the country which this people inhabited was very wild and mountainous, it is probable, that they led a wandering kind of life, and made frequent predatory incursions into the territories of their more wealthy neighbours, who, in revenge, gave them the opprobrious names of thieves and vagabonds; names which would not have been ill applied to the people of these parts in much later periods. It appears, from an inscription found at Risingham in Northumberland, that the national deity of the Gadeni was called Mogon, who might perhaps be the god of thieves among the Britons, as Mercury was among the Greeks and Romans.† The Gadeni probably made some kind of submission to the Romans under Agricola, at the same time with their neighbours on all hands; but as their country was never much frequented by that victorious people, who seem to have had no towns or stations in it, their obedience to the Roman government was only occasional. The country of the Gadeni was included in the province called Valentia, after that province was erected.

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 126. Dr Maepherson's Dissert, p 113.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 234.

23. The Selgovæ were seated to the west of the Gadeni, in the countries now called Eskdale, Annandale, and Nithsdale, lying along the shores of the Solway Firth, which is believed to have derived its name from that of this ancient British nation. \* Mr Baxter supposes that the name of this people was compounded of the two British words *Sel Giü*, which signify salt waves, alluding to the Solway Firth, with which the coasts of their country were washed: but the modern antiquary, quoted above, thinks it more probable, that the name was derived from the British word *Sealg*, which literally signifies hunting, and metaphorically theft. † The Selgovæ became first acquainted with the Romans, when Agricola marched his army through their country into Caledonia, in the second or third year of his government in Britain; at which time they made their submissions to that victorious general. ‡ From that period they were alternately under the dominion of the Romans, or enjoyed freedom as that people extended or contracted the limits of their empire in this island. The Romans had several stations and camps in the country of the Selgovæ, of which some vestiges are still remaining. ||

24. To the north-west of the Selgovæ were seated the Novantæ, in the countries which are now called Galloway, Carrick, Kyle, and Cun-

\* Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 215.

† Id. *ibid.* Dr Macpherson's Dissert. p. 115.

‡ Gordon's *Un. Septent.* p. 15, &c.

|| Id. *ibid.*—See Appendix.

ningham.\* The name of this ancient British nation is supposed by Mr Baxter to be compounded of the two British words *Now Hent*, which, he says, signify *New Inhabitants*.† This was one of those new and unknown nations, situated on the coast of Britain opposite to Ireland, and within sight of that island, which Agricola discovered and defeated in several battles, in the fifth year of his government, and in whose country he built some forts, and left some forces, with a view to favour an expedition which he meditated against Ireland.‡ But as this expedition never took place, these forces were soon withdrawn, and the forts abandoned; and this country, on account of its remote situation, was not much frequented by the Romans.

Damnii.

25. To the north of the Gadeni and Otodini were seated the Damnii, in the countries now called Clydesdale, Renfrew, Lenox, and Stirlingshire. The name of this nation, which is sometimes written Dumnii, might perhaps be derived from the British word *Dun*, which signifies a hill or mountain, a great part of their country being hilly and mountainous.¶ This was one of those British nations, formerly unknown to the Romans, which were discovered by Agricola in the third year of his government, when he penetrated to the river Tay. § It was

\* Camd. Brit. p. 1199.

† Tacit. vita. Agric. c. 24.

§ Tacit. vita Agric. c. 22.

† Baxt. Gloss. Brit. 184.

¶ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. 97.



in the country of the Damnii that Agricola built those forts into which he put his army in winter for the preservation of his conquests; as it was in the same country, and probably in the same tract, that the famous wall was built between the firths of Forth and Clyde, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, to protect the Roman territories from the incursions of the Caledonians.\* On account of this wall, and the many forts and castles upon it, this country was more frequented by the Romans, than any other to the north of Severus's wall; and more remains of that illustrious people have been discovered in it, than in any other part of Scotland.

These five last mentioned British nations, who possessed the country between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius, are sometimes called, in the Greek and Roman writers, by the general name of the Mæataæ.† This name, which was probably not unknown to the Britons themselves, is believed by some to have been derived from two British words, *Moi*, a plain, and *Aitich*, inhabitants; by others,‡ from these two, *Mæan*, middle, and *Aitich*; as being situated in the middle, between the provincial and unconquered Britons.

We have sufficient evidence, that the Roman armies, under Julius Agricola and the Emperor Severus, penetrated a considerable way into that

*Mæataæ.*

*The Romans had but an imperfect knowledge*

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 22.—See Appendix.

† Xiphilin. e Dione in Sever.

‡ Ossian's Works, v. 2. p. 219. Dr Macpherson's Dissert. p. 25.

of the  
country  
beyond  
Antoninus's wall.

part of Britain which lies to the north of the wall of Antoninus Pius, between the firths of Forth and Clyde. Tacitus gives a very distinct account of the first of these famous expeditions in Caledonia, and Dio Nicæus of the second. \* Many Roman coins have been found in several parts of that country, and there are still remaining in it very distinct vestiges of several Roman camps. † But it is no less evident, that the Romans never formed any solid or lasting establishment beyond the wall of Antoninus, which was always considered as the utmost limit of the Roman empire in Britain. ‡ We have no reason, therefore, to be surprised, that they had but a very imperfect knowledge of the most northerly parts of this island, and of their inhabitants. That knowledge was indeed so imperfect, that they imagined the country beyond the wall of Antoninus extended about threetimes as far from west to east as it did from south to north, which is directly contrary to the truth. || The reader must therefore rest contented with the following very brief and imperfect account of the British nations which dwelt beyond the Roman wall between Forth and Clyde.

Epidii.

26. The Epidii, or Pepidii, were the ancient inhabitants of the peninsula of Cantyr, and perhaps of some of the adjacent islands, and of part

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 21. to 39. Xiphilin. c. Dione in Sever.

† Gordon's Itin. Septent. p. 56, &c. Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 66.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 65.

|| Id. p. 64.

of Argyleshire and Lorn.\* Mr Baxter imagines the Pepidii derived their name from the British word Pepidiauc, which signifies any thing shaped like a flute or pipe, as was the peninsula of Cantyr, the country of the Pepidii.†

27. The Cerones, who were probably the same people with the Creones mentioned also by Ptolemy, were the most ancient inhabitants of Lochabar, and part of Rosse.‡

28. The Carnonacæ possessed that part of Rosse which is called Assenshire.§

29. The Carini seem to have dwelt about Lochbey, on the north-west coast of Rosseshire. By Camden they are placed in Caithness.||

30. The Cornavii were the ancient inhabitants of the most northerly point of Britain, called Strathnavern; which seems to retain some vestige of the name of its first possessors.¶

31. The Mertæ, if they are rightly placed by Ptolemy, must have been an inland people, inhabiting the north-west parts of Sutherland.\*\*

32. The Logi seem to have possessed the sea-coast of Sutherland.††

33. the Cantæ, according to Ptolemy, must have been seated on the north side of Tayne Firth. Mr Baxter placeth them in Buchan, which he derives from the British words Pow Chant, which he says signify the country of the Cantæ.‡‡

\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 569. Camd. Brit. p. 1462.

† Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 193.

§ Id. p. 566.

¶ Camd. Brit. p. 1279.

†† Id. p. 371.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 568.

|| Id. ibid.

\*\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 572.

‡‡ Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 65.

Caledonii.

34. The Caledonii seem to have possessed a very extensive tract of country, reaching from Lochfenn on the west, to the Firth of Tayne on the east coast, including Badenoch, Braidalbin, the inland parts of the shires of Murray, Bamf, Aberdeen, and Perth. The Greek and Roman historians and poets, who flourished in the first, second, and third centuries, when they have occasion to mention the affairs of Britain, give the general name of Caledonii to all the British nations without the limits of the Roman province, and that of Caledonia to their country. \* The reason of this might be, that the Caledonii were the most powerful and warlike of all these nations, and maintained some kind of superiority over the rest, who were contented to fight under their conduct against their common enemies, the Romans and provincial Britons. The name of the Caledonii, which, from being the proper name of one nation, became the common denomination of many, is evidently compounded of the two British words Caël and Dun, which signify the Gauls or Britons of the mountains; † a name very proper for the real Caledonii of Badenoch, Braidalbin, and the adjacent tracts, which are the most mountainous parts of Scotland, and not very unsuitable to the other nations, to whom it was given by the Roman authors.

No towns among the nine preceding nations.

It may not be improper to take notice, that, according to Ptolemy, who flourished about the

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 10. 25. 27. Niphilin. e Dione in Sever.

† Preface to Ossian's Poems, v. 2. p. 4.

middle of the second century, there was not so much as one British town among all the nine nations above named, who were the ancient inhabitants of the Highlands, and most northerly parts of Scotland. This seems to be a proof, that these nations, or rather tribes, at that period, led a wandering unsettled life, strangers to agriculture, subsisting on their flocks and herds, on what they caught in hunting or got by plunder, and on the spontaneous productions of the earth; which is exactly agreeable to the description which is given of them by Dio Nicæus, in the beginning of the third century.\* The three following nations, as they possessed a better country, seem to have been more settled, and in a more advanced state of civilization.

35. The Texali were the ancient inhabitants of <sup>Texali.</sup> the sea-coasts of Aberdeenshire; and had a town called Devana, at the mouth of the river Deva (Dee) where old Aberdeen now stands. †

36. The Vacomagi, according to Ptolemy, <sup>Vacomagi.</sup> seem to have possessed part of Murray, Athol, Mearns, and Angus. In this large and fine country they had these four towns, Bonatia, Tamea, Alata, Castra, and Tuesis; about the situation of which, antiquaries are so much divided in their opinions, that nothing certain can be determined.

37. It is not improbable that the Horesti, <sup>Horesti.</sup> who are mentioned by Tacitus, and were in

\* Xiphilin. e Dione in Sever.

† Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 569.



Agricola's time the inhabitants of Angus, had been incorporated with, or subdued by, the Vacomagi, before Ptolemy wrote his geography.\*

Venicon-  
tes.

38. The Venicontes were the ancient inhabitants of Fife; and had a town named Orrea, which, some think, was situated where St. Andrew's now stands;† while others imagine it was somewhere near the water of Ore, perhaps at Orrock.‡

Scots and  
Picts.

It hath been already observed, that all the unconquered Britons, who dwelt without the limits of the Roman empire, were commonly called by the general name of Caledonii, by the Romans and provincial Britons, during the first, second, and third centuries. It is now necessary to take notice, that about the beginning of the fourth century, these Britons were divided into two considerable nations, which began to be known in the world by the new names of Scots and Picts; about the origin and meaning of which names many volumes have been written, and prodigious quantities of ink and paper wasted. That we may not fatigue the reader, we shall not so much as mention the various opinions which have been advanced on the subject, but content ourselves with a few brief remarks. There is not then the least reason to imagine, that the British nations in the north and unconquered parts of this island, who, about the beginning of the fourth century,

\* Tacit. vita. Agric. c. 38.

† Baxt. Gloss. Brit. p. 169.

‡ Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 575.

began to be called Scots and Picts, were a different people from the Caledonians. For if any foreign nations had arrived in Britain at that time, and destroyed or conquered the Caledonians, and taken possession of their country, so great a revolution could not have escaped the notice of the Romans, who were very attentive to every thing that happened on their frontiers. It is almost equally certain that these new names were not assumed by the Caledonians themselves; for to this day they are not adopted by their genuine posterity in the Highlands of Scotland.\* To advance one step further, it is highly probable, that these names of Scots and Picts were imposed upon the Caledonians by their neighbours and enemies, the Provincial Britons, out of revenge for the many injuries which they suffered, by their frequent depredations. What renders this conjecture almost a certainty is, that these names, in the vulgar language of Britain at that time, were really names of reproach, expressive of the fierce, rapacious character of the Caledonians. For *Scuite* in the British tongue (which being latinized made *Scoti*) signifies the wandering nation, which was the real character of the inhabitants of the western coasts of North Britain at that time; and *Pictich* (latinized *Picti*) in the same language signifies thief or plunderer; which was no less characteristic of the

\* Dr Macpherson's Dissert. p. 107.

Caledonians on the east coasts.\* For though they differed from their countrymen in the west in several particulars, they most cordially united with them in plundering the Provincial Britons. It may be thought a further proof that this was the real origin of the names of the Scots and Picts, that the most ancient Roman authors who mention these nations by these names, often subjoin the epithets, vagantes, raptores, feræ, and the like, which are literal translations of the British words Scuite and Pictich.†

Such seem to have been the political divisions of the territories of this famous island, and distributions of its inhabitants, in the period we are now considering. Such readers as are desirous of seeing a much more ancient survey of the political state of Great Britain in this period, may consult the work quoted below.‡

Populous-  
ness of  
Britain.

It is impossible to discover the precise number of the people of Great Britain at the first Roman invasion. As both agriculture and commerce were then in their infancy in this island, and extensive tracts of it were covered with woods and marshes, we may be very certain it was far from being populous. If we allow twenty thousand persons of both sexes, and of all ages, to each of

\* Dissertation before Ossian's poems, v. 2. p. 5. Dr Macpherson's Dissertations, p. 110, 111.

† Ammian. Marcellin. l. 20. c. 1. p. 181. l. 27. c. 8. p. 383.

‡ Ricardi Monachi Westmonasteriensis de Situ Britannia, Libri duo. Havniæ 1757.

the thirty-eight British nations above mentioned, one with another, they will make in all 760,000. The learned author quoted by Mr Anderson, in the Introduction to his History of Commerce, makes only 360,000 persons to have been in England when Cæsar invaded it; which computation seems to be rather too low, when we consider what is said by Cæsar of the populousness of Britain, and by Tacitus and Dio of the numerous armies of the ancient British states.\* Upon the whole, it is not improbable, that there are nearly as many people at present in the metropolis of Great Britain, and its environs, as were in the whole island at the first Roman invasion.

It is now time to take a more attentive view of the constitution, government, and laws of these ancient British nations.

\* Cæsar Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 12. Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 54. Xiphilin. ex Dione in Neron.

## SECTION II.

*The Constitution, Government, and Laws of the ancient British Nations, before they were invaded and subdued by the Romans.*

Government of the ancient British states monarchical.

WE have sufficient reason to believe, both from the natural course of things, and from the testimonies of the best Greek and Roman authors, that the government of the ancient British nations, before they were invaded by the Romans, was monarchical. This is the most obvious form of government; it bears the greatest resemblance to the patriarchal; and hath therefore immediately succeeded it in almost all parts of the world.\* That this was the case in Britain, we have the clearest evidence. Cæsar every where speaks of the British states as under the government of kings, and hath preserved the names, and part of the history of several of these petty monarchs.† After the Emperor Claudius returned from his British expedition, he entertained the people of Rome, in the Campus Martius, with a magnificent representation of the surrender and submission of the kings of Britain, at which he appeared in his imperial

\* See the Origin of Laws, &c. v. 1. p. 10. and the authors there quoted.

† Cæs. de Bel. Gal, l. 4. c. 50. l. 5. c. 19, 20, 22.



robes. \* Diodorus Siculus and Pomponius Mela say expressly, that Britain contained many nations, which were all governed by kings. To these, if it were necessary, might be added the testimonies of Strabo and Solinus.† Dio Cassius seems to think, that the great success of the Romans in this island under the command of Aulus Plautius, the first Roman governor of Britain, was in some measure owing to this circumstance; “That the Britons were not then  
 “a free people, but under subjection to many  
 “different kings.”‡ It is necessary to consider a little more attentively what is said on this subject by Tacitus and Dio Nicæus; because it seems, at first sight, to be inconsistent with the testimonies of these other authors. “The nations of Britain, says Tacitus, were formerly  
 “subject to kings, but now they are miserably  
 “divided by the factious cabals of their leading  
 “men.” But here Tacitus is evidently speaking of the state of the British nations in the south in his own time; after their ancient government, which he confesses had been monarchical, was dissolved, and their kings were either killed, captivated, or subdued by the Romans. Dio Nicæus gives a very curious description of the British nations in the north, against whom the Emperor Severus was engaged; and, amongst

\* Sueton. vita Claud. c. 21. Diod. Sic. l. 5. c. 21. Pompon. Mela, l. 5. c. 6.

† Strabo, l. 4. p. 200. Solin. c. 51.

‡ Tacit. vita Agric. c. 12.

many other things, says, “ that the people in  
 “ these nations have a great share in the supreme  
 “ power.” \* These words refer only to the  
 Mæataë, who lived between the wall of Severus  
 and that of Antoninus Pius, and to the Caledo-  
 nians, who lived beyond the last of these walls;  
 and they can mean no more than this, that the  
 fierce and wandering tribes, which inhabited the  
 woods and mountains of Caledonia, were very  
 free, and impatient of the restraints of govern-  
 ment.

Rules of  
 succession  
 to the  
 throne in  
 the ancient  
 British  
 states.

2. The rules of succession to the royal autho-  
 rity, in these ancient British monarchies, were  
 probably not very well understood, nor very  
 firmly established. There is no appearance, how-  
 ever, that they were purely elective; but that  
 the succession proceeded in the royal family,  
 though not perhaps always in the direct line.  
 When a prince, at his death, left a son of an  
 age and capacity fit for government, he suc-  
 ceeded of course. This most obvious rule of  
 succession seems to have been well known and  
 much respected. Immanuentius, King of the  
 Trinobantes, had been killed by his powerful  
 and ambitious neighbour Cassibelanus, and his  
 son Mandubratius had been obliged to fly out  
 of the island to avoid the same fate. The young  
 prince put himself under the protection of  
 Cæsar, and came over with him into Britain in  
 his second expedition. Though the Trinobantes

\* Xiphilin. e Dione Nicæo in Sever.

had entered into the confederacy with the other British states under Cassibelanus, yet when they heard that their prince was in the Roman camp, they sent ambassadors to Cæsar with offers of submission on this condition: "That he sent them Mandubratius to succeed his father in the government of their state, and that he promised to protect him against the violence of Cassibelanus." \* This is a strong proof of their attachment to the family of their sovereign, and of their regard to this most natural rule of succession, that of a son to his father. When one of these ancient British monarchs left more than one son of mature age and suitable capacity, little or no regard seems to have been paid to the rights of primogeniture, but the dominions of the father were equally divided among his sons. In this manner the dominions of Cunobelinus were divided between his two sons, Caractacus and Togodumnus. † In this last case, and perhaps in some others, the will of the father appears to have been much regarded in the division of his dominions. For Cunobelinus excluded Adminius, one of his sons who had offended him, from any share in his succession. ‡ When a British king left no sons, he was succeeded by his daughter or his widow. By this rule Cartismandua became Queen of the Brigantes, and Boadicia Queen of the Iceni: and

\* Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 20.

† Dio. Cass. l. 60.

‡ Sueton. vita Calig. c. 44.

Tacitus acquaints us, “That in the succession “to royal authority, the Britons made no distinction of sexes.” \* We hear of no infant monarchs among the ancient Britons, and of regents governing in their name; of which it is probable they had no ideas. But it is improper to pursue this subject any further; for the truth is, that we are not furnished with a sufficient number of examples to enable us to discover what were the rules of succession in these ancient British kingdoms in many cases; nor can we be certain that those rules which we have already mentioned, were uniformly observed.

Law of  
Tanistry.

After states and kingdoms had been some time formed in any country, and men had enjoyed the advantages of law and government, they became sensible of the inconveniences of an interregnum and disputed succession, and endeavoured to provide against them by various means. In Ireland, and in the northern parts of this island, the law or custom of Tanistry (as it is called) prevailed in very ancient times. By this law, one of the royal family, most commonly the eldest son of the reigning prince, or one of the nearest or most worthy of his relations, was appointed to be his successor, and was called the Tanist, which signifies the second in dignity. † A similar custom also prevailed in Wales in the

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 16.

† Dr Macpherson's Dissertations, p. 182. Sir James Ware's Antiq. and Hist. of Ireland, c. 8.



tenth century, and probably long before. The Edling, which is translated princeps designatus, or the prince elect, was the chief person in the court of the kings of Wales, next to the king and queen. He was commonly the son, the brother, or the nephew of the reigning king, was appointed his successor, and enjoyed several honours and privileges as such.\* But whether they derived this custom from their British ancestors, or from their Saxon neighbours, it is not easy to determine; though the former supposition seems to be the most probable.

3. It is no less difficult to discover with certainty and precision, the prerogatives of those ancient British princes, the various kinds and different degrees of authority with which they were invested. These, it is probable, were not very accurately defined, nor uniformly exercised; and the light which history affords us on this subject, it must be confessed, is very faint. In general, we may conclude with certainty, that the power of these ancient British monarchs was not unlimited, but rather that it was circumscribed within very narrow bounds. This, Tacitus assures, was the case with the petty kings of the Germans in this period;† and as the manners, customs, and laws of the Germans and Britons of these times, bore a great resemblance to

\* *Leges Wallicæ Hoeli Dda.* A. Gul. Wottono editæ, l. 1. c. 9. p. 12.

† *Tacit. de Moribus German.* c. 7.



one another in many particulars, there can be no doubt but they did so in this.\* A fierce people, powerful and martial chieftains, and ministers of religion who had so much influence as the Druids, were not likely to submit to the will of a sovereign as the supreme law. They were indeed so far from doing this, that they wholly engrossed some, and very much encroached upon other prerogatives, which have been since esteemed essential to royalty, even in limited monarchies.

Com-  
manded  
the forces  
of their  
states in  
war.

One of the chief prerogatives of the British sovereigns was that of commanding the forces of their respective states in the time of war. This was acknowledged to be the undoubted right, and considered as the most important duty of sovereigns in these early ages; and whether these sovereigns were kings or queens, they always executed this office in person, and not by a substitute. This is not only agreeable to the observation of Aristotle, “That in the most ancient times, the same person who was the king of a nation in peace, was its general in war;”† but naturally results from those views which induced several families to unite into one state, and to submit to one sovereign; which certainly were, that he might defend them from their enemies, by conducting their united forces with prudence and valour. This is also confirmed by

\* Dr Macpherson's Dissertations, p. 151.

† Aristot. Politic. l. 5. c. 5.

every part of the British history of this period, in which we never hear of an army in the field but under the conduct of a king or queen. But even in the time of war, and at the head of their armies, the authority of these ancient British princes was not unlimited. They were obliged to pay no little deference to the opinions of the chieftains who commanded the several tribes of which their armies were composed, and of the Druids who constantly attended these armies. In particular, the kings had no power to imprison or punish any of their soldiers. This was wholly in the hands of the Druids. "None but  
"the priests can inflict confinement, stripes,  
"or correction of any kind; and they do this  
"not at the command of the general, but in  
"obedience to their Gods, who, they pretend,  
"are peculiarly present with their armies in  
"war."\* Nor could these princes give battle until the priests had performed their auguries, and declared that they were favourable.† It would not be very difficult to prevail with a people so brave and martial as the ancient Britons were, to commence hostilities against their enemies on very slight provocation; and yet we have no reason to believe that the British kings took upon them to make a formal declaration of war without consulting at least with their nobles

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.

† Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 1. c. 50.

and Druids. \* Among the ancient Germans and Gauls, this of declaring war was one of those great national affairs which was referred to the determination of all the warriors in a state, in their general assemblies; and in these they sometimes came to resolutions directly contrary to the will of their princes. † Ambiorix, King of the Eburones, a people of Gaul, made this excuse to Cæsar for having assaulted his camp; “That it had been done contrary to his advice and inclination, by the commands of his subjects; for that by the constitution of his state, the people had as much authority over him, as he had over them.” ‡ Monarchy seems indeed to have been rather more universally established in Britain than in Gaul and Germany; but we cannot suppose that the

\* These last, in particular, appear to have had a great deal of influence both in declaring war and making peace. “Kings (says one author) are not allowed to do any thing without the Druids; not so much as to consult about putting any design in execution without their participation. So that it is the Druids who reign in reality; and kings, though they sit on thrones, feast in splendour, and live in palaces, are no more than their instruments and ministers for executing their designs.”—(Dio. Chrysostom. Orat. 43.) “They listen with great veneration (says another) to the Druids, not only in all the affairs of peace, but even in war itself. Sometimes they step between two hostile armies, who are on the point of engaging in battle, and prevail upon them, as it were by a magical incantation, to desist. Thus, even in the fiercest barbarians, rage gives way to wisdom, and Mars submits to the Muses.”—(Diod. Sicul. Amstelodam. 1746. l. 5. p. 354.

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 56.

† Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 27.

power of the British monarchs of these times, was much greater than that of their cotemporary princes on the Continent, in those states in which that form of government was settled.\* In concluding peace, as well as in declaring war, the British kings were no doubt obliged to pay a regard to the advice and inclinations of their nobles and Druids. Several of those states which united under Cassibelanus in opposing the first invasions of the Romans, made their peace separately, very much against the will of that prince.

4. If the authority of these ancient kings of Britain was thus limited in the time of war, it was almost annihilated in the time of peace. As it was the dread of being overpowered by their hostile neighbours, which engaged several independent tribes to unite into one state, and submit to one sovereign; so, when that dread was at an end, the union of these tribes to one another, and their subjection to their common sovereign, became very weak, and they returned almost to their former independent patriarchal state. It required the experience of several ages to convince those wild untutored clans of the necessity of union, order, and submission to

Authority  
of the British  
monarchs di-  
minished  
in times of  
peace.

\* As a proof of this, we may observe, that the British princes made an excuse to Cæsar for having seized and imprisoned Comius, his ambassador, of the same kind with that of Ambiorix, viz. that it had been done by the multitude, without any command from them.—(Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 4. c. 27.)

† Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 20, 21.



law and government, in peace as well as in war. In some of the nations of Germany the royal authority entirely ceased as soon as a peace was concluded, and was revived again as soon as a war broke out. \*

Authority  
of exe-  
cuting the  
laws in the  
hands of  
the Dru-  
ids.

The British sovereigns of this period had not much authority either in the making or executing the laws, which are the principal acts of government in peaceful times. In that great relaxation of political union and civil government which prevailed in times of peace, their religion seems to have been the chief bond of union among the British tribes and nations; and the Druids, who were the ministers of that religion, appear to have possessed the sole authority of making, explaining, and executing the laws; an authority to which the clergy of the church of Rome long and eagerly aspired, but never fully obtained. One great reason of the superior success of the Druids in their ambitious schemes, was this: the laws among the ancient Britons, and some other ancient nations, were not considered as the decrees of their princes, but as the commands of their Gods; and the Druids were supposed to be the only persons to whom the Gods communicated the knowledge of their commands, and consequently the only persons who could declare and explain them to the people. † The violations of the laws were not

\* Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 23.

† Diod. Sicul. l. 5. § 31. p. 354. Strabo, l. 4. p. 197.



considered as crimes against the prince or state, but as sins against Heaven; for which the Druids, as the ministers of Heaven, had alone the right of taking vengeance. \* All these important prerogatives, of declaring, explaining, and executing the laws, the Druids enjoyed and exercised in their full extent. “ All controversies (says Cæsar) both public and private, are determined by the Druids. If any crime is committed, or any murder perpetrated; if any disputes arise about the division of inheritances, or the boundaries of estates, they alone have the right to pronounce sentence; and they are the only dispensers both of rewards and punishments.” † “ All the people (says Strabo) entertain the highest opinion of the justice of the Druids. To them all judgment, in public and private, in civil and criminal cases, is committed.” ‡ To these two, if it were necessary, the testimonies of several other ancient authors might be added. So fully did the Druids possess the power of judging in all cases, that they were not under the necessity of calling in the assistance of the secular arm to execute their sentences, but performed this also by their own authority, inflict-

\* Agreeable to this idea, when criminals were put to death, they were sacrificed to their Gods, and not to the justice of their country.—(Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 16.)

† Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

‡ Strabo ab Isaaco Casaub. edit. Lutetiae, 1620, 197.

ing with their own hands stripes and even death on those whom they had condemned.\* These ghostly judges had one engine which contributed much to procure submission to their decisions. This was the sentence of excommunication or interdict, which they pronounced against particular persons, or whole tribes, when they refused to submit to their decrees. The interdicts of the Druids were no less dreadful than those of the Popes, when their power was at its greatest height. The unhappy persons against whom they were fulminated, were not only excluded from all sacrifices and religious rites; but they were held in universal detestation, as impious and abominable; their company was avoided as dangerous and contaminating; they were declared incapable of any trust or honour, put out of the protection of the laws, and exposed to injuries of every kind; † a condition which must have rendered life intolerable, and have brought the most refractory spirits to submission.

Circumstances of the judicial proceedings of the

5. It is not possible to recover many particulars concerning the times, places, forms, and circumstances of the judicial proceedings of these awful judges. That they appropriated certain times and seasons for the discussion of such important causes as required deliberation, and could admit of delay, there can be no doubt. In settling these seasons or terms for judicial pro-

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7. Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 16.

† Cæsar. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 13.

ceedings, they could hardly fail to attend to these two circumstances—That they did not interfere with the times devoted to religion, of which they were the ministers, nor with the seasons of the most necessary occupations of the people, to whom they were to administer justice. On this last account, seed-time and harvest would be vacations. Agreeable to these observations, we find that there were but two law terms among the Welsh in very ancient times; the one in summer, from the ninth day of May to the ninth of August; the other in winter, from the ninth of November to the ninth of February; \* a custom which they probably derived from their British ancestors. Though the right of administering justice belonged to the order of Druids in general, yet there can be little doubt, that certain particular members of that order, in every country, were appointed to exercise that right, and execute the office of judges. How numerous these Druidical judges were, whether they were all of one rank, or some of them subordinate to others, what were the emoluments of their office, where, and with what forms and ceremonies they held their courts, with many other particulars which we might wish to know, cannot now be discovered with certainty. Their courts, it is probable, were held in the open air, for the conveniency of all who had occasion to attend them; and on an eminence, that all might

\* *Leges Wallicæ in Præfat. et in Legib. p. 122.*

see and hear their judges; and near their temples, to give the greater solemnity to their proceedings.\* There was at least one of these places of judicature in the territories of every state, perhaps in the lands of every clan or tribe. Whenever there was an Archdruid, he was the supreme judge in all causes, to whom appeals might be made from the tribunals of inferior judges, and from whose tribunal there was no appeal. To hear and determine all causes in the last resort, the Archdruid held a grand assize once in the year, at a fixed time and place; which was commonly at his ordinary or chief residence. The chief residence of the Archdruid of Gaul was at Dreux, in the Pais Chartrain; and at this place the grand assize for Gaul was held, which is thus described by Cæsar: “Once in the year, at a certain appointed time, “they assemble and hold a great court, in a certain consecrated place, in the country of the “Cornutes, which is thought to be in the very “centre of Gaul. Hither those who have any “lawsuits depending, flock from all parts to “receive their final determination, to which “they implicitly submit.”† The residence of the Archdruid of Britain, it is generally believed, was in the Isle of Anglesey; where it is imagined

\* By the ancient laws of Wales, the judge is directed to sit with his back to the sun or the storm, that they might not incommode him.—(*Leges Wallicæ*, l. 2. c. 10. § 12, p. 123.)—*Spelmanni Glossarium*, voce *Mallobergium*.

† Cæsar de Bel, Gal. l. 6. c. 15.



the grand assize was also held, and the supreme tribunal fixed. In this island, Mr Rowland thinks he hath discovered some vestiges of that tribunal still remaining, which he thus describes: "In the other end of this township of Fre'r Dryw, wherein all these ruins already mentioned are, there first appears a large cirque or theatre, raised up of earth and stones, to a great height, resembling a horseshoe, opening directly to the west, upon an even fair spot of ground. This cirque or theatre is made of earth and stones, carried and heaped there to form the bank. It is within the circumvallation, about twenty paces over; and the banks, where whole and unbroken, above five yards perpendicular height. It is called Bryn-Gwyn, or Brein-Gwyn, *i. e.* the supreme or royal tribunal. And such the place must have been, wherever it was, in which a supreme judge gave laws to a whole nation." \*

6. As the authority of the ancient British kings was very small, especially in times of peace, so their revenues could not be very great. Besides their family estates, which were commonly the most considerable of any in their respective nations, they had probably certain lands annexed to their crowns, to enable them to support their dignity, and maintain their numerous followers. It is also probable that the custom of making presents to their princes prevailed in Britain as

Revenues  
of the Bri-  
tish kings.

\* Rowland's *Mona Antiqua*, p. 89, 90.



well as in Germany, and was one considerable branch of their revenues. It is thus described by Tacitus: "The communities are wont, of their own accord, and man by man, to give to their princes a certain number of beasts, or a certain portion of grain; a contribution which passes for a mark of respect and honour, but serves only to supply their necessities."\* These things, which were at first given voluntarily, might perhaps be afterwards demanded as of right; and gave rise to those numerous prestations of different kinds, which were afterwards paid by the proprietors of land to their sovereigns in all the European kingdoms.† Martial princes, who were at the head of powerful and warlike nations, frequently received valuable presents from other princes and states who courted their friendship and protection. "They chiefly rejoice (says Tacitus) in the gifts which come from the bordering countries, sent not only by particular persons, but by whole states; such as fine horses, splendid armour, rich harness, with chains of gold and silver."‡ The riches of a British king, as they are described by Caractacus, in his famous speech to the Emperor Claudius, consisted of such things as these, and many of them were, no doubt, obtained in this manner.§ There was another source from which

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 15.

† Historical Dissertation on the Antiquity of the English Constitution, p. 105, &c.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 15.

§ Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 36.

some of these ancient British kings derived more ample revenues than from any of those which have been mentioned. This was their share of the booty or plunder which their subjects brought home by their predatory incursions into neighbouring states. Among the ancient Germans robbery was not in the least infamous or dishonourable, if committed without the territories of the state to which the robbers belonged; but was rather esteemed a laudable enterprise, necessary to keep their youth in exercise, and prevent them from sinking into effeminacy.\* Their greatest princes often put themselves at the head of these predatory bands, and, by the plunder which they obtained, supported their families and rewarded their followers.† These incursions were indeed dignified with the name of wars; but as they were undertaken without any provocation, and with no other view but to enrich themselves with the spoils of their neighbours, they deserve no better title than robberies. We have no reason to imagine that the kings of Britain were more reserved or scrupulous in this respect than their good brothers of Germany. When Caractacus was conducted into Rome a prisoner, the fine harness, the gold chains, and other valuable things which he had taken from his neighbours in war, were carried before him with great ostentation, as a spectacle not un-

\* Caesar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 25.

† Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 14.

worthy of the attention of the people of Rome, who had been accustomed to view the spoils of the richest monarchs.\* Long after this period, a very considerable part of the revenues of the kings of Wales arose from the plunder, especially the cattle which their subjects brought home by their incursions into the neighbouring states. By the laws of that country, a third part of all this booty belonged to the king; and it was one part of the office of the steward of the household to manage this branch of the royal revenue.† When the British kings began to coin money, which was between the first invasion of the Romans under Julius Cæsar and the second under Claudius, they perhaps made some profit by that coinage, which was one of their prerogatives.‡ From these, and probably from other sources to us unknown, the British princes of this early period derived such revenues, that some of them were accounted rich for the times in which they flourished. Caractacus boasts much of his riches in his speech to Claudius; and Tacitus says, that Prasutagus, King of the Iceni,

\* Tacit. *Annal.* l. 12. c. 36.

† *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 1. c. 14. p. 22.

‡ It is even probable that the ancient Britons were accustomed to pay certain taxes to their princes, as the Druids were exempted from the payment of these taxes by a special law.—(*Cæsar de Bel. Gal.* l. 6. c. 14.)—Tacitus also observes (*Vita Agric.* c. 15.) that the Britons paid their taxes, provided they were just and reasonable, with great cheerfulness; which seems to intimate, that they had not been altogether strangers to the payment of taxes to their own princes, though we know not what these taxes were.—*Camd. Brit.* v. 1. Introduction, p. 110.

was a prince very much renowned for his great wealth. \*

7. It is highly probable that the constitution of all the British states in this period was not exactly the same; but that some of their princes enjoyed greater powers and prerogatives than others. This, as we learn from the writings of Cæsar and Tacitus, was the case both in Gaul and Germany at this time; but we have not the advantage of such faithful and intelligent guides to enable us to point out the peculiarities in the constitution of the several states of Britain. History hath indeed preserved the knowledge of one ancient British kingdom, whose constitution was very singular, and whose princes enjoyed prerogatives of an extraordinary nature. This was the kingdom of the *Æbudæ*, or Western Islands of Caledonia, of which Solinus gives us the following account: “Next to these are the  
“*Æbudæ*, which, being only separated from  
“each other by narrow firths, or arms of the  
“sea, constitute one kingdom. The sovereign  
“of this kingdom hath nothing which he can  
“properly call his own, but he hath the free and  
“full use and enjoyment of all the possessions  
“of all his subjects. The reason of this regula-  
“tion is, that he may not be tempted to acts  
“of oppression and injustice, by the desire or  
“hope of increasing his possessions; since he  
“knows that he can possess nothing. This

Constitu-  
tion of all  
the British  
states not  
the same.



“prince is not so much as allowed to have a wife of his own, but he hath free access to the wives of all his subjects; that having no children which he knows to be his own, he may not be prompted to encroach on the privileges of his subjects, in order to aggrandize his family.”\* This very singular scheme of government (if there is any truth in the above narration) was probably the invention of some artful Druids, in whom these islands very much abounded, who thought themselves sufficiently happy in the enjoyment of all things, without the anxiety and trouble with which the possession of them is attended.

No universal monarch in Britain.

8. There was no supreme monarch in Britain, in this period, who had any paramount authority over the other monarchs. Sometimes, perhaps, one of these princes, by marriage, or by his superior valour and good fortune in war, obtained the dominion of two or more of these little kingdoms. But these kingdoms were soon after divided among that monarch's sons, and returned to their former independency. Nor were there so much as any extensive alliances or ties of union among these princes and states. They were not only independent, but jealous of one another; and, even in times of common danger, they had not so much political temper and wisdom, as to forget their animosity, and form one general confederacy for their common

\* Julii Solini Polihistoria. Basilæ, sine anno, c. 55. p. 168.



safety. To this want of union, Tacitus ascribes the ruin of these states, and their subjection to the Romans. “ There was one thing which “ gave us a great advantage against these power- “ ful nations, that they never consulted together “ in one body about the security of the whole. “ It was even rare that two or three of these “ states united their forces against the common “ enemy. By this means, while each of them “ fought separately, they were all successively “ subdued.” \*

II. States and kingdoms, as well as particular persons, have their birth and infancy. King-  
Progress of laws.  
 doms in their infant state are small and weak ; they have few laws, and these few are rather the dictates of necessity than of deliberation, established more by tacit consent than by any formal decree. In that state of society neither princes nor people are well qualified for being legislators ; and they are too much taken up with the more pressing cares of defending and providing for themselves, to have leisure for political speculations. But when they are well established, and have provided for their subsistence and security, they begin to think of making improvements in their government and laws. Crimes against the public and against individuals are prohibited and punished ; the rights and duties of all the different ranks of men in the state are ascertained ; property is secured ; the rules of succession settled ;

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 12.

a code of laws is gradually formed, and courts and judges appointed for putting them in execution. In their advances towards a state of political maturity, their laws are more or less complete, according to the stage of civilization at which they are arrived.

Antiquity  
of British  
laws.

The British kingdoms, we have reason to believe, were in possession of a system of laws of considerable extent, before they were subdued by the Romans. Some of these kingdoms had subsisted several ages before that period. Almost a whole century had elapsed between the first invasion under Julius Cæsar, and the second under Claudius; and yet we find no material difference in the political state of Britain in these two periods. In both it was divided into several little monarchies, each of which was governed by its own king; and it had, no doubt, been in this state long before the first of these invasions. In so long a course of time they must have acquired some skill in government and legislation, especially the Druids, who devoted their whole time to the study of learning, religion, and law, of which they were the great oracles and interpreters. This was certainly one important branch of that great system of learning, which required the constant application of twenty years; and as some of the Druids were designed and appointed judges in the several British kingdoms, these might perhaps apply more particularly to the study of law. But though it is thus highly probable, that the ancient Britons had a large

system of laws, a minute detail of the particulars contained in that system cannot be expected from any writer in this age. The most that can be done on this subject, is to make a few general observations on the nature and spirit of these ancient British laws, and to collect a few particulars which are preserved in history to support and illustrate these observations.

The laws, as well as the other branches of learning among the ancient Britons, were couched in verse. Though this may appear a little extraordinary to us, it was far from being peculiar to the ancient Britons. “The first laws of all nations (says a learned writer on this subject) were composed in verse, and sung. We have certain proof, that the first laws of Greece were a kind of songs. The laws of the ancient inhabitants of Spain were verses which they sung. Twiston was regarded by the Germans as their first lawgiver. They said he put his laws into verses and songs. This ancient custom was long kept up by several nations.” † This practice of composing their laws in verse, and forming them into songs, was owing to that surprising love which the nations of antiquity bore to poetry and music.‡ This also rendered those laws more agreeable to a poetical people, made it easier for them to get them by heart, and retain them in memory.

Composed  
in verse.

\* Origin of Laws, &c. by President de Goguet, v. 1. b. 1. p. 28, 29. atque auctor. ibi citat.

† See Chap. IV.

Never  
commit-  
ted to  
writing.

It was one of the most inviolable laws of the ancient Britons, never to commit any of their laws to writing. \* This is not ascribed by Cæsar to their ignorance of letters, but to other reasons ; for he expressly says in the same place, that they made use of letters both in public and private transactions. † To the two reasons which are assigned for this law, by that very intelligent writer, this third one may perhaps be added ; that while the laws were unwritten, they were more entirely in the hands, and at the disposal of the Druids ; who alone had leisure and opportunity to make themselves complete masters of them. But whatever were the reasons of this law, it was certainly the cause that we know so little of the laws of the ancient Britons. For as they were reposed in the breasts of the Druids, when they were destroyed their laws perished with them, except a few particulars which have been preserved by the Greek and Roman writers ; and a few others, which had taken such deep root in the minds and manners of the Britons, that they were discernible in the laws and customs of their posterity many ages after.

Considered  
as the com-  
mands of  
their Gods.

It hath been already observed, that the laws of the ancient Britons were considered as the laws of their Gods, rather than of their kings. Nor was this peculiar to the ancient Britons, it was the same in all other ancient nations. The first legislators were convinced, that their own autho-

\* Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 14.

† Id. *ibid.*



rity was not sufficient to bridle the impetuous passions of those bold and fierce men to whom they gave laws. They called Heaven to their assistance; and declared, that they had received their institutions from some Divinity, who would take vengeance on those who dared to violate them. Thus, Numa Pompilius, the great legislator of ancient Rome, gave out, that he received all his laws from the Goddess Egeria, “That the Barbarians (as Florus observes) “might receive and obey them.”\* One consequence of this view of their laws we have already mentioned, viz. that the priests of their Gods were the oracles of their laws. Another consequence of it was, that the laws which related to their religion, the worship of the Gods, and the privileges of their ministers, obtained the first place in their system of jurisprudence, and were declared to be of the most sacred and inviolable obligation. That the Gods are to be worshipped, was probably the very first law in the Druidical system.† To this all the other prescriptions relating to the rites, times, places, and other circumstances of that worship, would naturally follow, with proper sanctions to secure obedience. The laws ascertaining the honours, rights, and privileges of the Druids; those declaring their persons inviolable, and providing for their immunity from taxes and military services, were not forgotten.‡

\* Florus, l. 1. c. 2.

† Diogen. Laert. in proem.

‡ Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 14.



Law of  
marriage.

In the state of nature the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes was productive of the most shocking disorders and grievous calamities.\* It was one of the first cares, therefore, of all legislators, to regulate that intercourse, and secure the rights of marriage, on which the order, peace, and happiness of society so much depend. Accordingly, the institution of marriage is ascribed by all nations to their most ancient legislators.† That great law, the marriage of one man and one woman, which is so clearly pointed out by nature, was fully and firmly established among the ancient Britons. This is evident from their whole history, in which we never meet with the least hint, that any one man was allowed more than one wife, or any woman more than one husband. If such an indulgence had been allowed to any, it would have been to those who were invested with royal authority, as it was among the Germans at this period.‡ But kings and queens in Britain were subject to this great law, as well as their meanest subjects; and when they presumed to violate it, they were hated and abandoned by all the world. This appears from the story of Cartismandua, who was queen of the Brigantes in her own right, which is thus related by Tacitus: “Cartismandua, queen of

\* Quos venerem incertam rapientes more ferarum,  
Viribus editor, cædebat ut in grege taurus.

Hor. lib. 1. sat. 5. v. 109.

† Origin of Laws, &c. v. 1. p. 22.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. Germ. c. 18.

“ the Brigantes, was descended from a long race  
 “ of royal ancestors, and famous for her power  
 “ and wealth, to which she received a great  
 “ accession for betraying Caractacus to the  
 “ Emperor Claudius, to adorn his triumph.  
 “ Corrupted by her great prosperity, she aban-  
 “ doned herself to luxury; and, despising her hus-  
 “ band Venutius, she advanced her armour-bear-  
 “ er Vellocatius to his place in her throne and  
 “ bed. This flagitious action proved the ruin  
 “ of herself and family. For her subjects, the  
 “ Brigantes, espousing the cause of her injured  
 “ husband, she was reduced to the greatest dis-  
 “ tress, and implored the protection of the Ro-  
 “ mans. We sent an army to her relief, which  
 “ rescued her person, and fought several battles  
 “ in her cause; but she was at last obliged to leave  
 “ her kingdom in the possession of Venutius.” \*

Where this great law was thus firmly established,  
 we may be almost certain that all the circum-  
 stances of marriage were regulated, and the  
 rights of parents, husbands, wives, and children,  
 were ascertained. In Gaul, and perhaps in Bri-  
 tain, husbands and fathers had a very great au-  
 thority over their wives and children, even so  
 great as to put them to death; † but this au-  
 thority was undoubtedly regulated by certain  
 laws. In the ancient laws of Wales (which, in  
 this and several other particulars, were very pro-  
 bably derived from those of the ancient Britons)

\* Tacit. Histor. l. 3. c. 45.

† Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 19.

all the cases in which a husband was allowed to beat his wife are enumerated.\* The matrimonial tie among the ancient Britons was far from being indissoluble. They were too little accustomed to moral discipline, and the government of their passions, to submit to a restraint which was to end only with life. The laws of Hoel Dda, King of Wales, who was a Christian prince, and flourished in the tenth century, allow of a divorce for so trifling a cause as an unsavoury or disagreeable breath.† This law is so contrary to the precepts of Christianity, which had been long established in Wales, that we may be almost certain that it was one of the laws of their Heathen ancestors.‡ The ancient Britons are accused by several authors of some practices which are very inconsistent with conjugal fidelity.§ But as these practices are such as we can hardly suppose were established by law, they will fall more properly under our consideration in another place.||

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 4. sive *Triades Florences*, *Triad.* 5. p. 300. *Triad.* 155. p. 352.

† *Ibid.* *Triad.* 1. p. 298.

‡ But though marriage among the Britons (and indeed among all the nations of antiquity) was too easily and too frequently dissolved, yet the laws provided with great care for the maintenance of the children, and the equitable division of the effects of the family according to the circumstances of every case. The ancient laws of Wales descend to very long and particular details on this subject, and make provision for every possible case with the most minute exactness.—(*Leges Wallicæ*, l. 2. *De Mulieribus*, c. 1. p. 73, &c.)

§ *Cæs. de Bel. Gal.* l. 5. c. 14.

|| See Chap. VII. Of Manners.

The desire of procuring protection to their lives, persons, and properties, was one of the chief things which induced families to unite together, to form states and kingdoms, and to submit to the restraints of law and government. In their independent state, they enjoyed unlimited liberty, but little safety; and therefore they thought it prudent to resign a part of their liberty to obtain a greater degree of security against all acts of violence, and injuries of every kind. This security was obtained in society; and under regular government, by particular laws against all acts of violence, oppression, and injustice, enforced by proper penalties, and therefore called penal laws. By these laws, the whole power of the state was armed with vengeance against every particular member of it who dared to injure any other member, or to disturb the public peace and good order. The penal laws of almost all governments, at or near their first establishment, were remarkably severe; it being no easy matter to deter men from those acts of violence to which they had been accustomed in their independent state. \* Such were the most ancient penal laws of Germany, Gaul, and Britain, which abounded very much in capital punishments, and those of the most dreadful kind. By the laws of Gaul and Britain, a wife who was suspected of having occasioned the death of her husband, was tortured as cruelly as the vilest slave, and, if convicted,

Penal laws  
respecting  
men's per-  
sons.

\* Origin of Laws, &c. v. 1. p. 20.



was burnt to death in the most excruciating manner. \* By these laws also, not only murderers, but robbers, thieves, and some other criminals (perhaps adulterers), were punished with the same cruel kind of death. † In Germany, those who betrayed or deserted the cause of their country, were hanged on trees; and cowards, sluggards, debauchees, and prostitutes, were suffocated in mires and bogs. ‡ As there was so very striking a resemblance between the Germans and Britons in this period, it is not improbable, that these useless members and pests of human society were punished in the same manner in this island. § But besides these greater crimes against the state in general, or against particular members of it, which were capitally punished, there were many smaller injuries, such as maiming, wounding, striking, &c. which required to be discouraged, but did not deserve to be so severely punished. With regard to these, the most natural and obvious idea of punishment was that of retaliation. Accordingly we find, that this law of retaliation, or an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, &c. was established, not only among the Israelites, but also among the Greeks and Romans, and very probably among the Germans, Gauls, and Britons, in the most an-

\* Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 19.

† Ibid. c. 16.

‡ Tacit. de Morib. Germ. c. 12.

§ Dr Macpherson's Dissert. xii.—Is not the ducking-stool a relic of this last kind of punishment?



cient periods of their several states. \* But this law, so equitable in speculation, was every where found to be very inconvenient in practice ; and, when rigorously executed, it was often destructive to the criminal, and afforded no reparation to the injured party. For this reason, this law had many exceptions and abatements made to it in every country, and in many it went quite into disuse. In many cases it was found to be for the good of the public, and for the interest of the injured party, to accept of a certain compensation from the criminal in lieu of his corporal punishment. † “ In lighter transgressions, among  
 “ the ancient Germans, the punishment was  
 “ proportioned to the crime ; and the criminal,  
 “ upon conviction, was condemned to pay a  
 “ certain number of horses and cattle, which  
 “ were divided between the king or state, and  
 “ the person who had received the injury or his  
 “ family.” ‡ Though we cannot produce so express a testimony, that this practice of making compensation for corporal injuries prevailed in Britain before the Roman invasion, yet it seems probable that it did, and that the Druids, who had the administration of justice entirely in their hands, would encourage it for their own interest. After this law of compensations for bodily injuries was introduced, it gradually prevailed more and more, until it put an almost total

\* Exod. c. 21. v. 23. 25. Pausin. l. 1. c. 28. Aul. Gel. l. 20. c. 1.

† Exod. c. 21. v. 22. 30.

‡ Tacit de Morib. Germ. c. 12.

period to all corporal and capital punishments. Revenge, which is the prevailing passion in savage life, yielded to avarice, which is apt to prevail too much in the social state, when possessions become secure; and the family of a murdered person began to thirst more after the goods, than after the blood of the murderer; thinking the former a much better compensation for the loss of their friend than the latter. But as this great revolution in the spirit of penal laws did not take place in this island in the ancient British times, it doth not fall so properly under our present consideration.

Respecting  
their pro-  
perties.

As mankind in the social state, even after the rights of property were established, were exposed to injuries in their possessions, as well as in their persons, it became necessary to secure the former as well as the latter, by penal laws. Their flocks and herds were the most valuable possessions of almost all nations in the most early period of their history. Several of the British nations, when they were first invaded by the Romans, had no other possessions, or means of subsistence, but their cattle; and therefore we may be certain, that by their laws, the stealing or killing of any of these precious animals would be very penal, probably capital.\* Even when the severity of penal law was mitigated by admitting compensations, the compensations required for stealing, killing, or maiming horses, oxen, cows, sheep,

\* *Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 5. c. 14. l. 6. c. 16.*

swine, &c. were so high as made it very imprudent and dangerous to be guilty of these crimes. The ancient laws of Wales discover the most extreme solicitude and anxiety about the safety and preservation of animals of all kinds. A high price is set, not only upon the life, but upon every limb of every useful animal.\* The reader who hath no opportunity of seeing these laws, may form some judgment of their great minuteness from this circumstance: it is declared by a special law, that there are only three things appertaining either to field or domestic animals, for which no compensation shall be demanded, viz. the milk of a mare, the milk of a bitch, and the milk of a cat.† In those British states where agriculture was practised, a greater number and variety of penal laws were necessary, to protect the cattle and implements employed in husbandry; to prevent land-marks from being removed; and to preserve the precious fruits of the earth from being destroyed or injured. The labouring ox was the peculiar care of the wisest legislators; and to kill one of these useful animals, even for food, was declared to be an impious deed, and made capital by the laws of many ancient nations, and very probably by those of Britain. ‡

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 3. c. 3. p. 207—260.

† *Ibid.* l. 4. *Triad. Forens. Triad.* 209. p. 574.

‡ *Ælian. Hist. Animal.* l. 12. c. 54. *Varro de Re Rust.* l. 6. c. 5. *Plin.* l. 8. c. 45.

Ante etiam sceptrum Dictæi reges, et ante  
Impia quam cæsis gens est epulata juvenis,  
Aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat.

*Virg. Georg.* l. 2. v. 536.

By the ancient laws of Wales it was forbidden, under certain penalties, to throw a stone at an ox in the plough, to tie the yoke too tight about his neck, or to urge him on to too great an effort in drawing. \* These laws discover great attention to the preservation of that valuable animal. Ploughs, and all other implements of husbandry, which were left in the fields, were guarded by particular penal laws, from being stolen or destroyed. The removing of land-marks hath been declared highly criminal, and severely punished by the laws of all nations. † This is one of those crimes of which the Druids of Gaul and Britain took particular cognizance. ‡ Great care was also taken by ancient legislators to preserve the fruits of the earth from all injuries, and to procure full compensation for any damage they had sustained, that the industrious husbandman might not be robbed of the rewards of his toil. § The most ancient laws of Britain appear to have been remarkably severe on this head, and to have allowed very high damages to the husbandman; for by them he was authorized to seize and keep to himself one out of every three hogs, sheep, goats, geese, and hens, that he found among his corn; and he was even permitted to choose the second-best of the three. || But this law could only subsist in the infancy of agriculture,

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 5. c. 9. p. 281.

† *Duet* c. 19. v. 14. *Job*, c. 24. v. 2.

‡ *Cæs. de Bel. Gal.* l. 6. c. 13.

§ *Exod.* c. 22. v. 5, 6.

|| *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 5. c. 10. § 6. s. p. 285.



when corn was very scarce and precious, and these animals very plentiful and of little value. Accordingly, it was afterwards very much mitigated, and the husbandman was only allowed to take one out of fifteen hogs, and one out of thirty sheep, goats, geese, and hens; and if there was not so great a number, he was to have a compensation in money, according to that proportion.\* The great disproportion between hogs and the other creatures mentioned in this last law is very remarkable, and might perhaps be owing, either to the greater plenty of these animals, or to their being esteemed more destructive to the corn. In those British states which were frequented by foreign merchants, and where commerce was carried on, there would be occasion for another class of penal laws, to protect the goods of the adventurous merchant and mariner from being seized or stolen, especially in case of shipwreck, when they are most exposed to such injuries. What the particulars of these marine and mercantile laws were, cannot now be discovered; but we have some reason to think, that they were more just and generous than those of the middle ages, which gave the spoils of the unfortunate mariner either wholly to the king, or divided them between the king and the lord of the manor, where they were cast on shore.† For it will be made appear, that foreign mer-

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 5. c. 10. § 6. 8. p. 285.

† *Ibid.* l. 2. c. 17. p. 151, 152. *Spleman. Gloss. voce Wrecum maris.*



chants enjoyed very great security for themselves and their effects in this island, in the ancient British times. \* There were probably no penal laws among the ancient Britons to prevent or punish verbal injuries, which are so sensibly felt, and so fiercely resented in modern times. In almost all the nations of antiquity, the coarsest language was given and returned without ceremony, and was not considered as an object worthy of the attention of legislators.

British  
common  
law.

But security to their persons and properties from acts of violence, was not the only benefit which mankind derived from laws and government. By these, deceit and falsehood, as well as violence, were banished from society, or at least an attempt was made to banish them: by these, mutual trust and confidence were established among mankind; truth and fidelity were made to reign in their dealings, covenants, and engagements; or when they were violated, an easy method of redress was provided. In civilized nations, which have arrived at great knowledge in government and legislation, these desirable ends are obtained by a great number of positive statutes, or by established forms and rules of proceeding, which have acquired the force of statutes by immemorial custom. But in nations which have not attained to so great maturity, only certain general maxims of justice and equity are established, and the application of these

\* See Chap. VI.

maxims to particular cases, is left to the wisdom and integrity of the judges. This was certainly the state of what may be called the common law, among the ancient Britons. Those principles of truth, fidelity, justice, and equity, in which the Druids instructed the people in their discourses, they made the rules of their decisions when they acted as judges. An eminent sage of the law hath indeed affirmed, that the ancient Britons, before they were subdued by the Romans, were in possession of that admirable system of jurisprudence, the present common law of England; and that no material changes have been made in that system, either by the Romans, the Saxons, Danes, or Normans. His words are these: “ The realm  
“ of England was first inhabited by the Britons;  
“ next after them it was ruled by the Romans;  
“ then again by the Britons: after whom the  
“ Saxons possessed it, and changed its name  
“ from Britain to England: then the Danes  
“ for some time had the dominion of it; then  
“ again the Saxons: last of all the Normans,  
“ whose posterity govern it at present. Yet, in  
“ the times of all these different nations and  
“ kings, this kingdom hath always been go-  
“ verned by the same customs by which it is  
“ governed at present. If these ancient British  
“ customs had not been most excellent, reason,  
“ justice, and the love of their country, would  
“ have induced some of these kings to change or  
“ abolish them; especially the Romans, who  
“ ruled all the rest of the world by the Roman

“ laws. ” \* But these words of this great lawyer are rather to be considered as a panegyrical declamation, designed to inspire the young prince to whom they were addressed with veneration for the laws of England, than an historical narration dictated by strict truth. There might however be a considerable resemblance between the judicial decisions of the British Druids, and the regulations of the common law of England. For as right reason, equity, and justice, are eternally and universally the same ; if the decisions of the Druids were regulated by these, they would in similar cases, materially, though perhaps not formally, coincide with those of the common law, which is regulated by reason, equity, and justice. The design, for example, of the Druidical interdict described by Cæsar, was to procure submission to the laws, by depriving those of all benefit from them who refuse to submit to them:† this is also the design of an outlawry in the common law of England, and therefore there must be a material coincidence between these two legal operations. ‡ But that all the modes and forms of the common law of England were known to, and observed by the ancient Britons, before they were subdued by the Romans ; and that they have not been changed by that

\* Sir John Fortescue *de Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, published with notes by Mr Selden, c. 17. p. 38, 39.

† Cæsar *de Bel. Gal.* l. 6. c. 15.

‡ Bracton, l. 3. c. 15.

conquest, nor by any of the succeeding revolutions, is quite incredible. What Jeffrey of Monmouth says of the laws of King Molmutius and Queen Martia, merits no attention. \*

It is impossible for us to discover many particulars of the laws of evidence among the ancient Britons. That they made use of oaths or solemn appeals to their Gods, to oblige witnesses to declare the truth, we have not the least reason to doubt, when we consider that they were a very religious, or rather a very superstitious people, and that their judges were priests. We learn from Tacitus, that the forms of their vows and oaths were different in the different British nations; and that the members of each state observed that form of swearing which was established in their own country. † For as there is hardly any thing in which all the nations of the world have more universally agreed, than in making use of oaths, as the most effectual way of obliging witnesses to declare the truth in judgment; so there are few things in which they have differed more than in the forms of these oaths. The ancient Welsh had some very singular forms of giving evidence, which are too indelicate to be quoted even in a dead language, and which it is highly probable they derived, in part at least, from their British ancestors.

Laws of evidence.

It is impossible to discover whether the laws of compurgation were known to the ancient Britons

Laws of compurgation.

\* Gaulfrid. Monumut. l. 11. c. 17. l. 111. c. 15.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 54.



or not. By these laws, which obtained in very early times among the Welsh, when a person accused denied the accusation upon oath, he was obliged to bring a certain number of compurgators to swear to the truth or credibility of what he had sworn. The number of compurgators required by these laws was proportioned to the nature of the crime; and if the compurgators were such in number and quality as the laws required in that case, and swore with sufficient unanimity to the innocence of the person accused, he was acquitted; if not, he was condemned. \*

**Torture.** When sufficient evidence was not given against a person accused, by the depositions of witnesses, both the Gauls and Britons, in some cases, employed the cruel method of torture to force unhappy persons to confess their guilt. “When a wife (says Cæsar) is accused of having had any hand in the death of her husband, she is put to the same kind of torture with the meanest slave.” †

**Ordeals.** The great object which many nations of antiquity seem to have had in view in their criminal trials, was not so much to preserve the innocent from being condemned, as to prevent the guilty from escaping condemnation. Therefore, when they could neither prove their guilt by witnesses, nor extort a confession by tortures,

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 11. c. 9. l. 111. c. 5. p. 103, 109.

† *Cæs. Bel. Gal.* l. 6. c. 19.



they applied to Heaven for evidence against them, and interrogated Omniscience by many different rites. It would be easy to demonstrate that the practice of applying to Heaven for a discovery of the guilt of criminals by various ordeals (which constituted so great a part of the jurisprudence of all the nations of Europe in the middle ages) was known to the Greeks, Romans, and several other nations, in very early times.\* It appears from a remarkable passage in Velleius Paterculus, that the judicial combat was the most common way of determining all kinds of controversies among the Germans in the Augustan age. For that historian acquaints us, that the Germans betrayed Quinctilius Varus, the Roman commander, in their country, into a profound security, which proved fatal to himself and his whole army, by bringing many of their disputes before his tribunal, and by pretending that they were much better pleased with that rational method of ending them, than with their own barbarous custom of deciding them by the sword.† When all this is considered, we can hardly entertain a doubt, that the Druidical judges of Gaul and Britain pretended to interrogate their Gods, by various ordeals, about the guilt of those persons who were brought before their tribunals, when little evidence of it could be found amongst men. For

\* Spelmanni Glossarium, voc. *Judicium Dei*, p. 524. *Stiernhook de Jure Saxonum*, c. 8. p. 85.

† C. Vell. Patere. *Ilist.* l. 11. c. 118.

they were great pretenders to divination, and were believed by the people to have the most effectual arts of discovering the will of their Gods on all occasions ; and they could not but perceive that this kind of evidence might be made to prove whatever they pleased, and put the lives and fortunes of all men into their hands. It is not improbable that those questions or tortures, to which wives suspected of the murder of their husbands were put, might be fire or water ordeals, or something of that kind. However this may be, it is very certain that when this celestial evidence (as it may be called) was once introduced into the trial of criminals, human testimony came to be very little regarded ; and the fate of all who were accused depended almost entirely upon the pretended depositions of these invisible witnesses. This will appear in a very strong and surprising light in our history of the laws of evidence, in the next period.

Laws of  
succession.

To be protected in their lives, persons, and properties, and in the enjoyment of all their rights, are inestimable blessings which mankind derive from equitable laws and regular government ; but even these are not all the benefits which they derive from them. For though men cannot enjoy their possessions any longer than they live, yet they are very far from being indifferent to whom they shall devolve at their death. The care and labour which they have bestowed upon them, the comforts and enjoyments which they have received from them,

make them earnestly desire that they may be possessed by those persons who are naturally the objects of their affection ; and the assurance that they will be so, gives them no little satisfaction. But this satisfaction can only be enjoyed in the social state, and under the influence of laws regulating the order of succession. These laws of succession have been different in different countries ; and even in the same country, in different periods of society. In those ancient British states, where the whole riches of the people consisted in their flocks and herds, the laws of succession were few and simple ; and a man's cattle, at his death, were divided equally among his sons ; or, if he left no sons, among his daughters ; or, if he left no children, among his nearest relations. This was the rule of succession among the ancient Germans as well as Britons.\* These nations seem to have had no idea of the rights of primogeniture, or that the eldest son had any title to a larger share of his father's effects than the youngest. This rule of an equal division was so inviolably observed by the Germans, and probably by the Britons, that the father could make no other distribution of his goods by will or testament.† The laws of succession seem to have been much the same in those British states where the lands were divided and cultivated. A man's lands at his death did not descend to his eldest son, but were equally divided among all

\* Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

† Id. ibid.

his sons ; and when any dispute arose in the division of them, it was determined by the Druids. \* This law or custom (which in England was afterwards known by the name of Gavelkind) was observed very long among the posterity of the ancient Britons. It appears plainly in the laws of Hoel Dda, King of Wales, in the tenth century. By that time, indeed, the clergy were labouring hard to introduce the observation of the canon law, which favoured the right of primogeniture ; but the municipal laws of Wales were still in favour of the ancient custom of an equal division. “ By the ecclesiastical law, none shall  
“ succeed to the father in his estate, but his  
“ eldest son, lawfully begotten. By the laws  
“ of Hoel Dda, it is decreed, that the youngest  
“ son shall have an equal share of the estate with  
“ the eldest.” \* Nay, in some other places of these laws, which settle the manner in which the estate was to be divided among the sons, it appears that the youngest was more favoured in the division than the eldest, or any of his brothers. “ When the brothers have divided their  
“ father’s estate amongst them, the youngest  
“ brother shall have the best house, with all the  
“ office-houses ; the implements of husbandry,  
“ his father’s kettle, his ax for cutting wood,  
“ and his knife. These three last things the  
“ father cannot give away by gift, nor leave by

\* Cæs. de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 15.

† Leges Wallicæ, l. 11. c. 17. p. 149.

“his last will to any but his youngest son ; and  
 “if they are pledged, they shall be redeemed.” \*  
 The reason of this extraordinary law might perhaps be this : The elder brothers of a family were supposed to have left their father’s house before his death, and to have obtained houses and necessaries of their own ; but the youngest, by reason of his tender age, and by continuing in his father’s family to the last, was considered as more helpless and worse provided.

This account of the constitution, government, and laws of the ancient Britons, before they were invaded by the Romans, will perhaps appear to some readers too minute and tedious, and to others very imperfect and defective. To give as little disgust as we can to the former, and as much satisfaction as we can to the latter, several particulars relating to the polity of the Britons of this period, are referred to the chapter on Manners and Customs, where they may be introduced with equal propriety. †

Some particulars referred to chap. 7.

\* *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 11. c. 12. p. 159.

† See Chap. VII.



## SECTION III.

*The Civil and Military Government of the Romans in Britain.*

Romans  
excelled in  
the arts of  
govern-  
ment.

THE Romans are better entitled to the admiration of mankind, for their policy in preserving and governing, than for their valour in making their conquests. Their valour was sanguinary and destructive; but their policy, though selfish and interested, was salutary and beneficial. By the former, they spread desolation and the horrors of war through all the countries of Europe, and through several provinces of Asia and Africa; by the latter, they introduced civility, order, wise laws, and regular government into all these countries. For there was nothing at which that extraordinary people laboured with greater earnestness, than to establish their own laws and government in every country which they conquered. This they accomplished in Britain, though one of the most distant provinces of their empire, as will appear from the following very brief detail of their civil and military arrangements in those parts of this island which were reduced to their obedience.

Cæsar  
made no  
change in  
govern-  
ment in  
Britain.

The two expeditions of Julius Cæsar were so short and transient, that they made no important or lasting change in the political state of Britain. After his departure, all things returned

into their former course, and so continued, with very little variation, for more than ninety years. \*

The next invasion, under the Emperor Claudius, was more serious, and produced more important consequences. As soon as some of the British nations in the south-east corner of this island had submitted to that Emperor, the Romans began to practise here their usual arts for securing, improving, and enlarging their acquisitions. With this view, they formed alliances with the Iceni, the Dobuni, the Brigantes, and perhaps with some other British nations. † From these alliances the Romans derived many advantages. ‡ They prevented these powerful nations from forming a confederacy with the other British states, in defence of their common liberty, and for expelling the ambitious invaders of their country, before they had obtained a firm footing. They also gained a plausible pretence of obtruding their commands upon them on all occasions, under the appearance of friendly advices; and if these were not observed, of quarrelling with them, and reducing them to subjection. This was, sooner or later, the fate of all the allies of that ambitious and artful people, as well as of those in Britain.

Some  
changes  
made by  
Claudius.

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 15.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 31. See sect. 1. of this Chap. ¶ 11, 12. 21.

‡ Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 32.

Policy of  
the Ro-  
mans.

It was with the same interested views that the Emperor Claudius and his successors heaped such uncommon favours on Cogidunus, King of the Dobuni; who had early and warmly embraced their cause against that of his country. This prince was not only permitted to retain his own dominions, but some other states were put under his government; to make the world believe that the Romans were as generous to their friends as they were terrible to their enemies. “For (as “ Tacitus honestly confesseth) it was a custom “ which had been long received and practised “ by the Romans, to make use of kings as their “ instruments in establishing the bondage of na- “ tions, and subjecting them to their authority.”\* The honours and favours which they bestowed on Cogidunus, and other kings who embraced their cause, were dangerous and deceitful; much greater in appearance than in reality. They had no longer any authority of their own, but were wholly subservient to, and dependent upon, the Roman emperors, whose lieutenants they were, and by whom they might be degraded at pleasure. This was the case of Cogidunus, as appears from the inscription quoted below.† This very remarkable inscription, which was found at

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 14.

† Neptuno et Minervæ templum pro salute domus divinæ, ex auctoritate Tiberii Claudii, Cogidubni regis, legati augusti in Britannia, collegium fabrorum, et qui in eo a sacris sunt de suo dedicaverunt donante arcem Pudente, Pudentini filio.

Chichester, A. D. 1723, shows, among many other curious particulars, that Cogidunus, King of the Dobuni, had assumed the name of Tiberius Claudius, in compliment to the Emperor Claudius; and that he had been appointed imperial legate, in which capacity he governed that part of Britain which was subjected to his authority.

In order still further to secure their conquests, the Romans, as soon as it was possible, planted a colony of their veteran soldiers and others at Camulodunum, which had been the capital of Cunobelinus; agreeably to their constant practice of colonising wherever they conquered. From this practice the Romans derived many great advantages. The soldiers were thereby rendered more eager to make conquests, of which they hoped to enjoy a share: their veterans were at once rewarded for their past services, at a very small expense; and engaged to perform new services in defence of the state, in order to preserve their own properties: the city of Rome, and other cities of Italy, were relieved from time to time of their superfluous inhabitants, who were dangerous at home, but useful in the colonies: the Roman language, laws, manners, and arts, were introduced into the conquered countries, which were thereby improved and adorned, as well as secured and defended. For the capital of every Roman colony was Rome in miniature, and governed by similar laws and magistrates, and adorned with temples, courts,

theatres, statues, &c. in imitation of that great capital of the world. The sight of this magnificence charmed the conquered nations, and reconciled them to the dominion of a people by whom their several countries were so much improved and beautified. This further contributed to accustom these nations to the Roman yoke, by engaging them to imitate the magnificence and elegance, the pleasures and vices, of the Romans; which rivetted their chains, and made them fond of servitude.\* As the Romans enlarged their conquests in Britain, they planted new colonies in the most convenient places for preserving and improving these conquests; as at Caerleon, at Lincoln, at York, and at Chester.†

Free cities.

Still further to secure their conquest, and to gain the affections of those Britons who had submitted to their authority, the Romans, according to their usual policy in other countries, made London and Verulamium municipia, or free cities; bestowing on their inhabitants all the valuable privileges of Roman citizens.‡ By this means these two places were, in a few years, crowded with inhabitants, who were all zealous partisans of the Roman government. Both these facts are demonstrated by what happened to these two cities in the great revolt under Boadicia. The revolted Britons poured like a torrent upon

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 21.

† Vide Lipsium de magnitudine Romana, l. 1. c. 6.

‡ Aul. Gell. l. 16. c. 15. Spanheim. Orbis Roman. p. 37, 38, apud Grævium, tom. 2.



London and Verulamium, on account of their attachment to the Romans, and destroyed no fewer than seventy thousand of their inhabitants, which is a sufficient proof of their populousness.\*

By these arts, and by others of a military nature, which shall be hereafter mentioned, the Romans preserved, and, by degrees, enlarged that small province which they formed in the south-east parts of Britain in the reign of Claudius. The government of this province was committed, according to custom, to a president or imperial legate. The authority of these presidents of provinces, under the first Roman emperors, was very great. They had not only the chief command of the forts, garrisons, and armies within their provinces, but they had also the administration of justice, and the direction of all civil affairs in their hands. For by the Roman laws, all the powers of all the different magistrates of the city of Rome were bestowed upon every president of a province, within his own province: and, which was still more extraordinary, he was not obliged to exercise these powers according to the laws of Rome, but according to the general principles of equity, and in that manner which seemed to him most conducive to the good of his province.† The presidents of provinces had also a power to appoint com-

Presidents  
of the Ro-  
man pro-  
vince.

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 33.

† Digest. l. 1. tit. 18. § 10, 11, 12.

missioners, to hear and determine such causes as they had not leisure to judge of and determine in person.\* These extraordinary powers with which the presidents of provinces were invested, were no doubt frequently abused, to the great oppression of the provincials. This appears to have been very much the case in Britain before Julius Agricola was advanced to the government of this province. For that excellent person employed his first winter in redressing the grievances of the provincial Britons, which had been so great, that they had occasioned frequent revolts, and had rendered a state of peace more terrible to them than a state of war.† The Emperor Hadrian abridged this exorbitant power of the presidents of provinces, by an edict which he promulgated, A.D. 131.‡ This was called the perpetual edict, and contained a system of rules by which the provincial presidents were to regulate their conduct in their judicial capacity, in order to render the administration of justice uniform in all the provinces of the empire.

Imperial  
procurator.

The only officer who was in any degree independent of the president of the province, was the imperial procurator, who had the chief direction in the collection and management of the imperial revenues. § This officer often acted as a spy upon the governor of the province, and informed

\* Digest. l. 1. tit. 18. § 8, 9.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 19, 20.

‡ Histoire des Empereurs par Tillemont, tom. 2. p. 244.

§ Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 60.

the Emperor of any thing that he had observed wrong in his conduct. \* At other times, these officers agreed too well in deceiving the Emperor, and in plundering and oppressing the provincials. “Formerly (said the discontented Britons before their great revolt) we were subject only to one king, but now we are under the domination of two tyrants; the imperial president, who insults our persons, and the imperial procurator, who plunders our goods; and the agreement of these two tyrants is no less pernicious to us than their discord.”† Though this was the language of violent discontent, and therefore probably too strong, yet we have reason to believe, that when a perfectly good understanding subsisted between these two officers, they sometimes agreed to enrich themselves at the expense of the subjects; especially in those provinces that were at a great distance from the seat of empire.

From the promulgation of the perpetual edict of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 131, to the final departure of the Romans out of this island, was about three hundred years; and during that long period the laws of Rome were firmly established in all the Roman dominions in Britain. To lay before the reader only a catalogue of the titles or subjects of these laws, could give him little satisfaction, and would swell this section beyond all proportion, and therefore must not be attempted.

\* See chap. I.

† Tacit. vita Agric. c. 15.

All these laws were collected into one body, digested into regular order, and published by the Emperor Justinian, under the title of his Digests, or Pandects. This admirable system of laws is still extant, and constitutes the greatest and most valuable part of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, or body of civil law.\* It is one of the noblest monuments of the good sense of that illustrious people, and of their great talents for government and legislation. The introduction and establishment of these wise, just, and equitable laws, were among the chief advantages which mankind derived from the empire of the Romans. The destruction of the authority, and loss of the knowledge of these laws, were among the most fatal consequences of the fall of that empire; and it may be added, that the happy discovery of a copy of the Pandects of Justinian at Amalphi, A. D. 1137, by which the knowledge of these laws was recovered, was one of the great means of raising the European nations from that deplorable barbarism into which they had long been plunged.†

Britain divided into provinces.

The Roman territories in Britain, for more than one hundred and fifty years, made only one province; but about the beginning of the third century, they were divided into two provinces, by the Emperor Severus.‡ At length, when the

\* Vide *Corpus Juris Civilis*.

† See Dr Robertson's *History of Charles V.* vol. i. p. 65, &c. p. 316, &c.

‡ Herodian, l. 5. c. 24.

authority of the Romans extended over all that part of this island which lies to the south of the wall between the firths of Forth and Clyde, that whole country was divided into five provinces ; of whose names, situations, limits, and inhabitants, it may be proper to give the following brief account.

1. Beginning at the south end of the island, Flavia Cæsariensis. the first province we meet with in this most perfect state of the Roman government in Britain, was called Flavia Cæsariensis. This province extended over the whole breadth of the island where it is broadest, from the Land's-end in Cornwall, to the South Foreland in Kent ; and was bounded on the south by the English Channel, on the north by the Bristol Channel, the Severn, and the Thames. It comprehended the countries of the Danmonii, Durotriges, Belgæ, Atrebatii, Regni, and Cantii ; which are now Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Surrey, Sussex, and Kent.\* Though this province, on account of its situation, is named first, it was not first established ; but the countries comprehended in it made a part of the one Roman province in Britain, from the time when they were subdued to the reign of the Emperor Severus. When that Emperor divided the Roman territories in Britain into two provinces, these countries made a part of the southern one, and so continued until Constantine the Great formed them into a distinct pro-

\* See the Map of Britain, according to the Notitia.



vince, which was called Flavia Cæsariensis, from Flavius, one of the names of that Emperor.\*

Britannia  
Prima.

2. Britannia Prima was probably so named, because it contained some of the countries which first submitted to the Romans in this island. This province was bounded on the south by the Thames, on the east by the British Ocean, on the north by the Humber, and on the west by the Severn; and comprehended the countries of the Dobuni, Cattivellauni, Trinobantes, Iceni, and Coritani; which are now Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire.†

Britannia  
Secunda.

3. Britannia Secunda perhaps received that name, when Severus divided the Roman dominions in Britain into two provinces, of which this was the second. It was bounded on the south by the Bristol Channel and the Severn, on the west by St. George's Channel, on the north by the Irish Sea, and on the east by Britannia Prima.‡ This province contained the countries of the Cornavii, Silures, Demetæ, and Orduices; which are now Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Cheshire, Herefordshire, Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire, Caermarthenshire, Pem-

\* Hors. Brit. Rom. p. 408.

† See the Map of Britain according to the Notitia.

‡ See the Map.

brokeshire, Cardiganshire, Montgomeryshire, Merionethshire, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, and Flintshire.

4. The fourth province was called *Maxima Cæsariensis*; but neither the reason of this name, Maxima Cæsariensis. nor the time when this province was erected, are certainly known. It was bounded on the south by the Humber, on the east by the German Ocean, on the west by the Irish Sea, and on the north by the wall of Severus; and contained the countries of the *Parisi* and *Brigantes*; which are now the counties of York, Durham, Lancaster, Cumberland, and Northumberland.\*

5. *Valentia* was the fifth and most northerly Valentia. province of the Romans in Britain. It was erected, A. D. 369, by the victorious general *Theodosius*, and called *Valentia*, in honour of the Emperor *Valens*. This province contained all that extensive tract of country which lay between the walls of *Severus* and *Antoninus Pius*; and was inhabited by several British nations, which, besides their particular names, were called by the general name of *Maeatae*.

The Roman emperors, from time to time, Vicar of Britain. created new officers to assist them in the management of their prodigious empire; and made frequent changes in the distribution of the civil power. It would be very improper to enter upon a minute detail of all these changes; but that one which was made by *Constantine the Great* was so

\* *Ammian. Marcellin. l. 28. c. 5.* See the Map.

considerable in itself, and so much affected the political state of Britain, that it merits a place in this section. That renowned Emperor having obtained the dominion of the whole Roman empire, by a series of glorious victories over all his rivals, divided it into the four prefectures of the East, of Illyricum, of Italy, and of Gaul; over each of which he established a prefect, who had the chief authority in the civil government of his own prefecture. Each of these prefectures were subdivided into a certain number of dioceses, according to its extent and other circumstances; and each of these dioceses was governed under the prefect, by an officer who was called the vicar of that diocese.\* The prefecture of Gaul comprehended the three dioceses of Gaul, Spain, and Britain; which last was governed under the prefect of Gaul, by an officer called the vicar of Britain, whose authority extended over all the provinces in this island. The vicar of Britain resided chiefly at London, and lived in great pomp. His court was composed of the following officers for transacting the business of his government; a principal officer of the agents, a principal secretary, two chief auditors of accounts, a master of the prisons, a notary, a secretary for despatches, and assistant, under-assistants, clerks for appeals, serjeants, and inferior officers.† Appeals might be made to him from the governors of the provinces, and from him to

\* Zosim. l. 2. *Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript.* l. 8. p. 450.

† *Notitia Imperii*, c. 49.

the prefect of Gaul. The title of the Vicar of Britain was *Spectabilis* (his Excellence), and the ensigns of his office were a book of instructions in a green cover, and five castles on the triangular form of the island, representing the five provinces under his jurisdiction.\* Each of the five provinces in Britain had a particular governor, who resided within the province, and had a court composed of a competent number of officers for despatching the several branches of business. The governors of the two most northerly provinces, *Valentia* and *Maxima Cæsariensis*, which were most exposed to danger, were of consular dignity; but those of the other three were only styled presidents. By the vicar of Britain and these five governors of provinces, with their respective officers, all civil affairs were regulated, justice was administered, and the taxes and public revenues of all kinds were collected.†

Though ambition was long the reigning passion of the Romans, they were far from being inattentive to their interests, but studied how to gain wealth, as well as glory, by their conquests. When nations first submitted to their authority, they often obliged them to pay a certain stipulated sum of money, or quantity of corn, annually, by way of tribute; leaving them for some time in

\* See the Map, Appendix.

† *Notitia Imperii*, c. 49. Heineccius *Antiq. Rom.* tom. 4. p. 258.

the possession of their other privileges; and these nations were called tributaries.\* Thus Julius Cæsar imposed a certain annual tribute on the British states which made their submissions to him, though he hath not mentioned either the nature or quantity of that tribute.† But the Romans did not commonly continue long to treat those nations which had submitted to them with this indulgence, but on one pretence or other they soon reduced them into provinces, and subjected them to a great variety of taxations, which were levied with much severity. To this state were the British nations reduced by the Emperor Claudius and his successors, which makes it necessary to give a very brief account of some of the chief taxes which the Romans imposed upon their provinces, and particularly on this island.

**Land-tax.**

One of the chief taxes which the Romans imposed on their provincial subjects, was a certain proportion of the produce of all their arable lands, which may not improperly be called a land-tax. This proportion varied at different times, and in different places, from the fifth part to the twentieth, though the most common proportion was the tenth.‡ This tax was imposed upon the people of Britain, with this additional hardship, that the farmers were obliged

\* Heineccius Antiq. Rom. l. 1. Append. 114.

† Cæs. de Bel. Gal.

‡ Lipsius de Magnitud. Rom. l. 2. c. 1. Heineccius Antiq. Rom. l. 1. Appendix, 115.



by the publicans to carry their tithe-corn to a great distance, or to pay them some bribe, to be excused from that trouble. This great abuse was rectified by Agricola, though the tax itself was still exacted, and even augmented.\* When the Romans had occasion for corn to supply the city of Rome or their armies, this tax was levied in kind; but when they had not, it was paid in money according to a certain fixed rate.† They exacted a still higher proportion, commonly a fifth part of the produce, of orchards, perhaps because less labour was required in their cultivation.‡ The produce of this land-tax became so great in Britain, by the improvements that were made in agriculture, that it not only supplied all the Roman troops in this island with corn, but afforded a considerable surplus for exportation. §

The Romans also imposed a tax, in all the provinces of their empire, on pasture-grounds, or rather on the cattle that grazed in them. This tax was called *Scriptura* (the writing), because the collectors of it visited all the pastures, and took an exact list of all the cattle of different kinds in writing, and demanded a certain sum for each beast, according to an established rate. ||

Tax called  
*Scriptura*.

\* Tacit. *vita Agric.* c. 19.

† Spartian. in *Sever.* c. 8.

‡ Appian. *apud Lips. de Magnitud. Rom.* l. 2. c. 1.

§ Ammian. *Marcellin.* l. 18. c. 2.

|| Lips. *de Magnitud. Rom.* l. 2. c. 1. Heinec. *Ant. Rom.* l. 1. *Append.* 116.

This tax proved very oppressive to the Britons when it was first imposed by the Emperor Claudius, and for some time after. For as they abounded in cattle, it amounted to a great sum; and being destitute of money to pay the tax, they were obliged either to sell some of their cattle at a disadvantage, or to borrow money from the wealthy Romans at an exorbitant interest. The famous Seneca alone is said to have lent the distressed Britons, on this occasion, the prodigious sum of three hundred and twenty thousand pounds; and that his demanding it with rigour, at a time when they were not able to pay, pushed them on, among other things, to the great revolt under Boadicia. \* This tax was sometimes taken in kind, when they needed cattle for their armies. † Nor were meadows exempted from taxation; for a certain proportion of their produce (most probably the tenth) was exacted, in order to provide forage for the cavalry. ‡

Tax on  
mines.

The Romans, not contented with these impositions on lands of different kinds, extracted taxes from the very bowels of the earth, and obliged the proprietors of mines of all kinds of metal to pay a certain proportion of their profits to the state. Gold mines were commonly seized by the emperors, wrought at their expense and for their

\* Xiphilin. ex Dione Nicaeo in Sever.

† Pet. Burmannus de Vectigal. Pop. Rom. p. 49.

‡ Id. ibid. p. 48.

profit; but the proprietors of mines of silver, copper, iron, lead, &c. were permitted to work them for their own benefit, upon paying the tax which was imposed upon them; which seems to have been the tenth part of what they produced.\* The revenue arising from the mines in some provinces was prodigious. The silver mines near New Carthage in Spain are said to have employed forty thousand men, and to have yielded a revenue of twenty-five thousand drachmæ, or 600*l.* of our money a day, to the Romans.† This industrious people had not been long in Britain before they discovered and wrought mines of gold, silver, and other metals to so much advantage, that they yielded them an ample reward for their toils and victories, though we know not the particular sum.‡

The expenses of the Roman empire were divided into two classes, which may not improperly be called their civil and military lists; to each of which certain taxes were appropriated.§ One of the chief branches of revenue that was allotted to the support of the military establishment, was the twentieth part of all estates and

Roman  
civil and  
military  
lists.

\* Pet. Burmannus de Vectigal. Pop. Rom. p. 80.—If this was the tenth part of the produce of these mines, as it probably was, they yielded 6000*l.* of our money a day, which was three shillings a day for every person employed in working them. The drachmæ is computed at eight in the ounce of silver, which is the lowest computation.

† Strabo. l. 5. p. 147, 148.

‡ Tacit. vita Agric. c. 12.

§ Sueton. in Augustum, c. 99.

legacies that were left by will to such persons as were without a certain degree of consanguinity, or would not have been entitled to them by right of blood without that will. This tax was collected in Britain, and in all the other provinces of the empire, and yielded a very great revenue. It was generally paid with pleasure; as those who had gotten estates and legacies to which they had no natural right, were in such good humour, that they did not grudge to pay a moderate proportion of them to the state.\* Another branch of revenue which was appropriated to the military list, was the twenty-fifth part of the price of all the slaves that were sold in all the provinces of the Roman empire; and, considering the great number of these slaves, and the high prices at which some of them were sold, this tax must have produced a very great sum.† To this list also was allotted the money which arose from the tax upon all kinds of goods that were sold by auction, or in the public markets, above a certain value. This tax was sometimes the two hundredth, sometimes the one hundredth part, and sometimes a greater proportion of the price.‡

Poll-tax.

There is sufficient evidence that the Roman emperors, sometimes at least, imposed a capitation, or poll-tax, on all their provincial subjects; though the quantity and proportion of

\* Petrus Burmannus de Vectigal. Pop. Rom. c. 11.

† Lipsius de Magnitud. Rom. l. 1. c. 4.

‡ Burman. p. 68. Lips. l. 1. c. 4. Clarke on Coins, p. 188. Note.

this tax, the manner in which it was levied, and some other circumstances of it, are not very well known. \* It appears that this tax, with another upon the bodies of the dead before they were allowed to be buried, were levied in Britain, and occasioned great discontent. The famous Boadicia complained bitterly of these two taxes, in her harangue to the British army, before the battle with the Romans under Suetonius. “ Have “ we not been deprived of our most valuable “ possessions, and do we not pay many heavy “ taxes for what remains? Besides all the various “ impositions on our lands and goods, are not “ our bodies taxed, and do we not pay for the “ very heads on our shoulders? But why do I “ dwell on their impositions upon the living, “ when even the dead are not exempted from “ their exactions? Do you not all know how “ much we are obliged to pay for the bodies of “ our departed friends? Those who are subject “ to other nations are subject only for life, but “ such is the exquisite tyranny and insatiable “ avarice of the Romans, that they extort taxes “ even from the dead.” †

The Romans imposed a great variety of taxes Various taxes. on particular things, as on houses, pillars, hearths, on several kinds of animals, on urine, dung, &c. and (if we can believe some authors) even on the air itself, in all the provinces of

\* Luke, chap. ii. v. 1, 2, 5. Lipsius de Magnitud. Rom. l. 1. c. 3.

† Niphilini. ex Dione Nicæo in Nerone.



their empire. \* Artists of all kinds paid a certain tax for the liberty of exercising their several arts; those who administered to luxury, and made the greatest profits, paying the greatest sums: nor did the mighty monarchs of Rome disdain to claim a share in the dishonourable gains of female prostitution. † In this enumeration of taxes, no notice hath been taken of the portoria of the Romans, which corresponded to our customs on all goods exported and imported, though they constituted one of the chief branches of their revenues in some provinces, and were not inconsiderable in Britain, because they will fall more naturally under our consideration in the history of commerce. ‡

Caution.

It is not to be imagined, that all these taxes were imposed on the provincial Britons immediately after they submitted to the Roman government. It was the wise policy of the Romans to treat their new subjects with great lenity, and to accustom them to the yoke by degrees; imposing one tax after another, as their improvements in arts and opulence enabled them to pay them. Nor is it to be supposed, that all these taxes were invariably and constantly exacted, even after they had been imposed. For it appears from the clearest evidence, that there were great changes made by the Romans, both in the nature and measure of their taxes, accord-

\* Petrus Burmannus de Vectigal. Pop. Rom. c. 12.

† Id. *ibid.*

‡ See Chap. VI.

ing to the circumstances of the state, and the dispositions of the emperors. Alexander Severus in particular, who filled the imperial throne from A.D. 223 to A.D. 236, prompted by the goodness of his heart, made a very great and imprudent reduction of the provincial taxes, which proved his ruin.\* But it is improper to enter into any further detail of these changes and variations.

Though it is impossible to discover the exact value of the Roman revenues in Britain, we have reason to believe that these revenues were very considerable. They were sufficient, not only to defray all the expenses of the civil government, and to support a very large military establishment, but also to afford valuable remittances to the Imperial treasury. For the Romans were too wise a people to preserve an unprofitable conquest for so long a time, and with so much anxiety and labour. The British revenues were even so great, that they encouraged several generals to assume the Imperial purple, and enabled them to support that high dignity without any other income.† If the calculations of Lipsius, concerning the Roman revenues of Gaul, be just, those of Britain could not be less than two millions sterling annually.‡ This is one proof, among many others, that this island did not recover the damage which it sustained by the

Amount  
of the Ro-  
man reve-  
nues in  
Britain.

\* Lampridius in vita Alexandri, c. 59. p. 965.

† See Chap. 1.

‡ Lipsius de Magnitud. Rom. l. 2. c. 5.

departure of the Romans, and the devastations which succeeded that event, for more than a thousand years.

Military  
govern-  
ment.

Such was the regular plan of the civil government of the Romans in Britain : it is now time to take a short view of their military arrangements in this island, which were no less prudent and regular.

Disarmed  
the con-  
quered  
Britons.

One of the first steps the Romans took, after they had subdued some of the British nations, was to disarm them, in order to put it out of their power to shake off the yoke, and recover their freedom. But as there is nothing a brave and martial people resign with so much reluctance as their arms, the Britons struggled hard to retain them, and opposed this measure with great vigour, in frequent revolts and insurrections. \* At length however the Romans prevailed, and entirely disarmed all the provincial Britons, who soon after lost all their martial spirit, and became an abject and dastardly people, without either inclination or ability to resist the will of their lordly masters.

Impressed  
the British  
youth.

Still further to secure their conquests in this island, and to make these conquests the means of establishing their power in other places, the Romans pressed into their service great numbers of the bravest and most robust of the British youth, trained them to the use of arms, and sent them

\* Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 31.

into different and distant provinces of their empire. \*

As the Romans advanced in their conquests Built forts. in Britain, they built chains of forts in the most proper situations, with a view of keeping those nations who had submitted in subjection, and of repelling the incursions of those who were still unconquered. †

But the chief engine employed by the Ro- Standing army. mans, both in making and securing their conquests here, as well as in other countries, was their standing army, which was constituted and regulated in the wisest manner for answering both these purposes. Though this is certainly not the proper place to give a minute delineation of the constitution of a Roman army, it may not be improper to take notice, that the troops which were stationed in this island, were collected from many distinct and remote provinces of the empire; and differed from each other, and from the Britons, in their manners, customs, and languages. ‡ By this contrivance they were prevented from forming conspiracies among themselves, or with the native Britons, in order to cast off the Roman yoke. After the provincial Britons were so entirely subdued and disarmed, that no further insurrections were to be apprehended from them, the Roman troops

\* Tacit. vita Agric. c. 13. to 31.

† Tacit. Annal. l. 12. c. 51. Vita Agric. c. 23.

‡ Notitia Imperii, § 52. 63.

were, for the most part, withdrawn from the internal parts of the provinces, and stationed on the frontiers for their protection.

Change in  
the mili-  
tary go-  
vernment.

About the same time that the new arrangements, which have been above described, were made in the civil government of the empire, a similar change was made in the government of its military forces. Constantine the Great, thinking the prætorian prefects, who had the chief direction both of civil and military affairs, were too powerful, he divested them of their military authority, and appointed in their room two new officers, called *Magistri Militum* (Masters of the Soldiers); one of which had the chief command of the cavalry, and the other of the infantry.\* Neither of these generals had their ordinary residence in Britain, which was too remote from the centre of the empire; but the Roman troops in this island were commanded under them, by the three following officers: 1. *Comes Littoris Saxonici per Britannium*, the Count of the Saxon Shore in Britain. 2. *Comes Britanniarum*, the Count of Britain. 3. *Dux Britanniarum*, the Duke of Britain.† Of these three officers, and the forces under their command, the following short account will be sufficient.

Count of  
the Saxon  
Shore.

In the third century the south and east coasts of Britain began to be much infested by Saxon pirates, and from thence got the name of *Littus Saxonicum*, the Saxon Shore. To protect the

\* Zosim. l. 2. *Notit. Imper.* § 85.

† *Ibid.* § 52, 55. 65.



country from the depredations of these pirates, the Romans not only kept a fleet on these coasts, but also built a chain of forts in the most convenient places, into which they put garrisons: and the officer who commanded in chief all these forts and garrisons, was called Comes Littoris Saxonici per Britanniam, the Count of the Saxon Shore in Britain. The number of these forts was nine; and they were situated at the following places, beginning at the most northerly, and advancing southwards. 1. Branodunum, Brancaster: 2. Garionnonum, Burghcastle, near Yarmouth; both on the Norfolk coast: 3. Othona, Ithanchester, not far from Malden, in Essex; now overflowed by the sea: 4. Regulbium, Reculver: 5. Rutupæ, Richborough: 6. Dubris, Dover: 7. Lemanæ, Lime; these four last on the coast of Kent: 8. Anderida, Hastings, or East-Bourn, in Sussex: and 9. Portus Adurnus, Portsmouth, in Hampshire.\* These nine forts were garrisoned by about 2200 foot, and 200 horse. The ensigns of the Count of the Saxon shore in Britain were, a book of instructions, and the figures of nine castles, representing the nine forts under his command. The court of this count was composed of the following officers. A principal officer from the court of the master of the foot: two auditors from the above mentioned court: a master of the prisons, from the same court: a secretary: an assistant: an

\* Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 472. See Appendix.

under-assistant : a register : clerks of appeals : serjeants, and other under officers. \*

Counts of  
Britain.

In the courts of the Roman emperors, from Augustus downwards, there were certain counsellors who attended the emperor, both at home and abroad, to assist him with their advice on all occasions. These counsellors were styled *Comites Augustales*, or *Comites Augusti*, companions of the emperor, from their constant attendance on his person. They were divided into three orders or degrees, and those of each order had certain privileges and appointments, while they attended the imperial court. As these *comites* or companions had frequent access to the emperors, they often stood high in their favour, and obtained from them the government of provinces, towns, forts, and castles, and other offices of profit and honour. When these *comites* left the imperial court, to take upon them the government of a province, town, or castle, or the exercise of any office, they were no longer called *Comites Augustales*, companions of the emperor, but *Comites* of such a province, town, castle, or office.† Such were the *Comites Littoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, the Counts of the Saxon Shore in Britain : and such also were the *Comites Britanniarum*, or Counts of Britain. These last counts commanded

\* *Notitia*, § 52. See Appendix.

† Selden's *Titles of Honour*, p. 241, &c. Du Cange *Gloss. voce Comites*.

the Roman forces in the interior parts of Britain, distributed into the towns, forts, and castles in these parts. The forces under the counts of Britain are supposed to have been originally about 3000 foot and 600 horse; but after the internal tranquillity of the country was fully secured, these forces seem to have been removed out of the island, or to have been stationed on the frontiers; for in the fifty-third section of the *Notitia Imperii*, where the court of this count is described, no notice is taken of any forces under his command.\*

The word *Dux* (which originally signified the commander or leader of an army in general), under the lower empire, became the title of a particular military officer, who commanded the Roman forces in a certain district, most commonly on the frontiers.† Such was the *Dux Britanniarum*, or Duke of Britain, who commanded on the northern frontiers, over thirty-seven fortified places, and the troops stationed in them. Twenty-three of these forts under the government of the Duke of Britain, were situated on the line of Severus's wall; and the other fourteen at no great distance from it.‡ In these thirty-seven forts or stations, about 14,000 foot and 900 horse were placed in garrisons.§ The court of the Duke of Britain was exactly similiar

Duke of  
Britain.

\* *Notitia Imperii*. § 40. 55. Brady Hist. v. 1. p. 41.

† Zosim. l. 2. Du Cange Gloss. v. *Dux*.

‡ *Notitia Imperii*, § 65. Horsley Brit. Rom. p. 477.

§ Brady Hist. v. 1. p. 47.

to that of the Count of the Saxon Shore above described.

Number of  
the Roman  
troops.

From this short account of the military establishment of the Romans in Britain, it appears, that the ordinary standing army in this island consisted of about 19,200 foot, and 1700 horse. It is not indeed to be imagined that the several corps of which it was composed were always complete, especially when it is considered that many of them received their recruits from very distant countries. It is rather probable, that the effective men in the ordinary standing army here, were several thousands short of the above number ; especially after the troops under the command of the Count of Britain were withdrawn. This army, besides performing the three important services of guarding the coasts against the Saxon pirates, securing the internal tranquillity of the country, and protecting the northern frontiers from the incursions of the Scots and Picts, executed many noble works of utility and ornament.

From this very brief and imperfect delineation of the civil and military government of the Romans in this island, it will appear, that they were not altogether unworthy of the high compliment which is paid them on this subject by the most illustrious of their own poets :

Excudent alii spirantia mollius æra :  
Credo equidem, vivos ducent de marmore vultus :  
Orabunt caussas melius, cœlique meatus  
Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent.

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane: memento,  
(Hæ tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem,  
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

*Æneid. lib. vi. v. 849.*

The final departure of the Romans out of Britain seems to have been attended with an almost total dissolution of all order, law, and government. The wretched Britons, instead of recovering their liberty by that event, beheld themselves plunged into a state of anarchy and confusion, more deplorable than their former servitude. The families of the ancient British princes had been either extinguished or blended with the common people; so that few or none could produce any title to seize the reins of government. The Romans had so entirely excluded the native Britons from all concerns in the administration of civil and military affairs, that few of them had any skill or capacity in the conduct of such affairs. Nothing can be more shocking than the picture which is drawn by our most ancient historian Gildas, of the political condition of the provincial Britons, after the departure of those who had been so long their governors and guardians. It represents them as a lawless, disorderly, abandoned rabble; slaughtered by the Scots and Picts almost without resistance; and slaughtering one another, as soon as these common enemies retired.\*

Effect of  
the de-  
parture  
of the Ro-  
mans.

In a little time the miseries of this state of anarchy became so intolerable, that the Britons,

British go-  
vernment.

\* Gildas Hist. c. 15, 16.



in order to preserve themselves from total destruction, found it necessary to restore monarchical government, in imitation of that under which they had formerly lived in great security. But they seem to have been very unfortunate in the choice of their first monarchs. “ They set  
 “ up kings (says Gildas) but not in God ; and  
 “ these kings were, in a little time, cut off by  
 “ those who had advanced them, and others  
 “ elected in their room, still more cruel and  
 “ unworthy. ” \* History hath not preserved so much as the names of these unfortunate momentary monarchs. We are only told, that when a report prevailed that the Scots and Picts were meditating a more formidable invasion than any of the former ones, with a design to conquer the whole country, and settle in it, a general convention was called of all who possessed any authority among the Britons. In this assembly Vortigern (who is called by Gildas, Duke of the Britons, probably in imitation of the Roman officer who bore that title) had the chief sway. By his influence the Saxons were invited into Britain, who brought about another revolution in the constitution, government, and laws of the greatest part of this island ; † which will be the subject of the third chapter of the second book of this work.

\* Gildæ Hist. c. 19.

† Id. *ibid.* c. 22, 23.













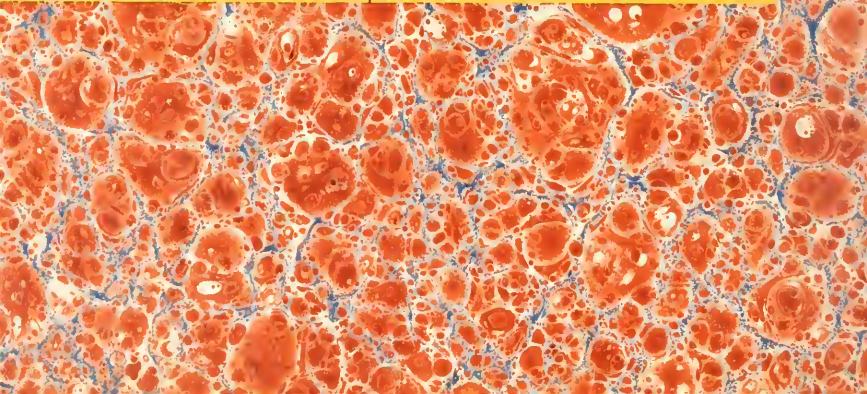
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